

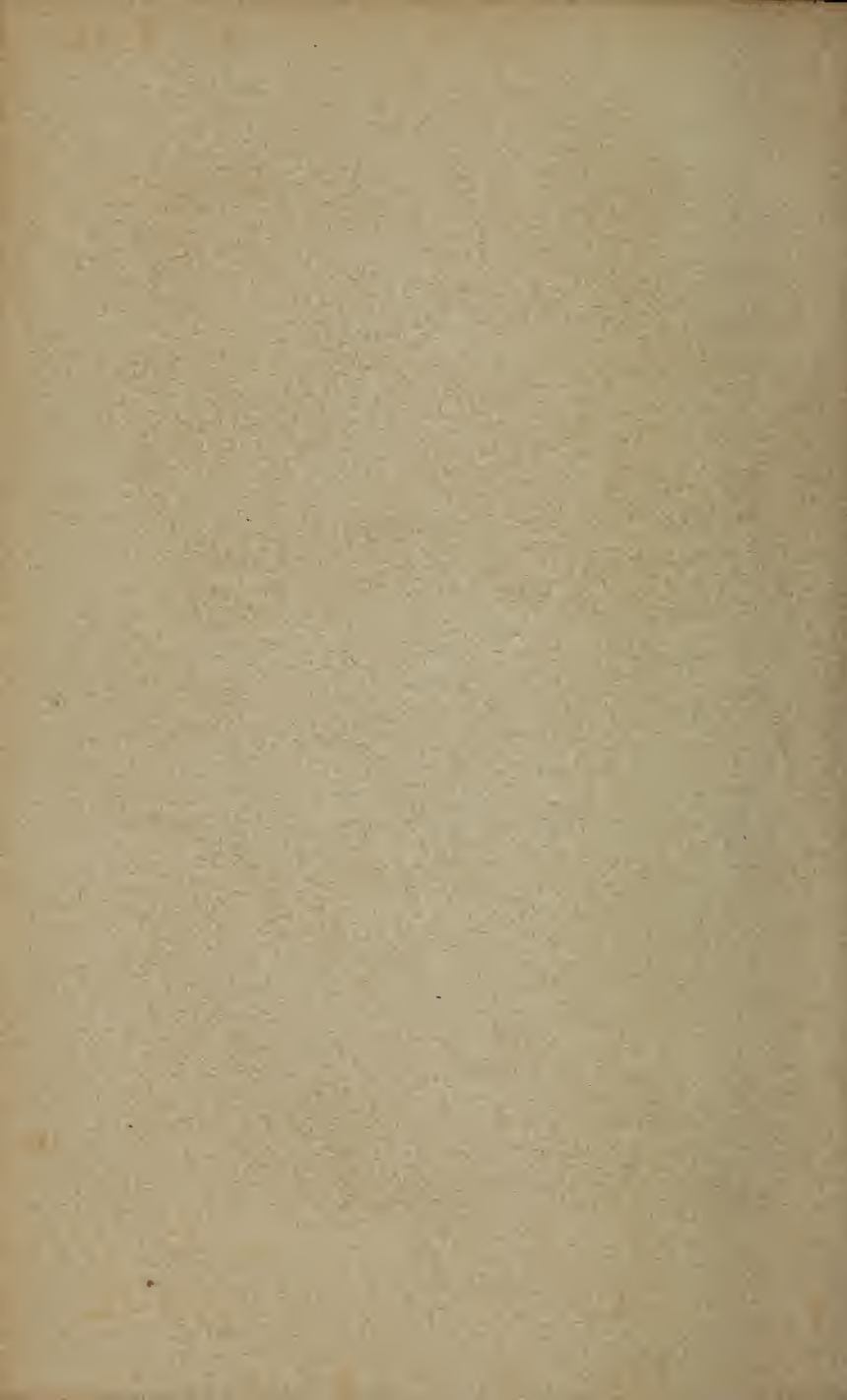
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. Copyright No.

Shelf BV 4 501

B 25

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



Recd. at 306. of S. April 12. 1851.

CHRISTIAN EFFORT:

OR,

FACTS AND INCIDENTS DESIGNED TO ENFORCE AND
ILLUSTRATE

THE

DUTY OF INDIVIDUAL LABOUR FOR THE
SALVATION OF SOULS.

BY SARAH BAKER.

He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.
JESUS CHRIST.

1871

New-York:

PUBLISHED BY LANE & SCOTT,
200 Mulberry-street.

JOSEPH LONGKING, PRINTER.

1850.

*Deposited in the Clerk's Office
S. C. Dist. of New York
Dec. 28. 1850.*

THE LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

Entered, according to Act of Congress,

BV4501
B25

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1850, by
LANE & SCOTT,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern
District of New-York.

P R E F A C E.

FOR some years past, the subject of the following pages has rested with much weight on the mind of the writer, and now the work is submitted to the Christian public with a simple purpose to glorify God and save souls. It has been prepared in circumstances of great embarrassment, and in much bodily weakness and suffering, at distant and protracted intervals. Still, among all these difficulties, the writer has felt a strong sense of duty to endeavour to contribute something to the cause of Christian enterprise; and it is hoped that the duties here attempted to be enforced, will be rather regarded by the reader, than the imperfect manner in which the work is done.

“Principle instructs us,—precepts guide us ; but examples move us. Example is principle and precept embodied, living and in action. We see not only what is done, and what ought to be done ; but what can be done, and how it is done.” It has, accordingly, been thought best to exhibit the principle and duty of Christian effort by examples and incidents, gathered from responsible sources.

The writer is fully aware that the remarks on many of the subjects introduced are exceedingly meager, compared with their importance. On some of those subjects, a volume, rather than a brief chapter, might have been written. It is hoped, however, that the reader’s own mind will make up these necessary omissions, and present, with all appropriate fulness, the several subjects that are here only suggested.

It is remarked by Seneca, that “the

husbandmen in Egypt never look up to heaven for rain in time of drought, but to the overflowing of the Nile." So with many when they read a book : they look more to the wit, the style, the learning of the author, than to the blessing of God on what they read. "He that makes not conscience of praying over what he reads," says an admired author, "will find little sweetness or profit in his reading. Luther professeth that he profited more in knowledge of the Scriptures in a short space of time, than by study in a longer. John, when weeping, had the sealed book opened. Men would gain much more by reading good men's works, if they would but pray more over what they read. Ah, Christians ! pray before you read, and pray after you read, that all may be blessed and sanctified to you."

The writer would, therefore, earnestly solicit the reader's prayers for the Di-

vine blessing upon the perusal of this little volume ; and especially that grace may be afforded to enable each to reduce to practice the duties that it may suggest, that all may be enabled to live not for themselves alone, “but unto Him who hath died for us, and rose again.” So prays

THE AUTHOR.

Dorchester, Mass., 1850.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I.—THE DUTY OF PERSONAL CHRISTIAN EFFORT CONSIDERED	9
II.—PARENTS' DEPARTMENT—CONVERSION OF CHILDREN	21
III.—RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF CHILDREN .	41
IV.—SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHERS	63
V.—MINISTERS' DEPARTMENT—THEIR DU- TY OUT OF THE PULPIT	82
VI.—DUTY OF EMPLOYERS	98
VII.—DUTY OF THE EMPLOYED	118
VIII.—DOMESTIC DEPARTMENT	130
IX.—HOW CHILDREN MAY DO GOOD . . .	146
X.—SEAMEN'S DEPARTMENT	157
XI.—COMBINATION OF PERSONAL EFFORT .	172
XII.—ON VISITING	182
XIII.—USE AND INFLUENCE OF GOOD BOOKS .	194

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIV.—TRACT DISTRIBUTION	209
XV.—THE CHRISTIAN CORRESPONDENT . . .	219
XVI.—TRAVELLER'S DEPARTMENT	227
XVII.—POWER OF PRAYER WHEN OTHER MEANS HAVE APPARENTLY FAILED	234
XVIII.—PLAN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER	241
XIX.—CONCLUSION	261

CHRISTIAN EFFORT.

CHAPTER I.

THE DUTY OF PERSONAL CHRISTIAN EFFORT CONSIDERED.

GOD, in the Holy Scriptures, has most clearly taught his people their duty and privilege of being "workers together with him," in giving to a lost and perishing world a knowledge of salvation, through the gospel of his Son.

Not only are their duty and privilege thus taught, but God has also endowed his people with various talents for the performance of this work. And, in addition to these, the Holy Ghost has been given as a teacher and helper, without whom the prayers and labours of the most devoted Christian would avail nothing. The apostle says, "A manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." Jesus also says, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring

all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."

On the day of Pentecost, when the disciples "were all with one accord in one place," the promised gift of the Holy Ghost was imparted: "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Of the Spirit's influence we shall speak more fully in another chapter. We would here offer a few thoughts in regard to the *form* which the Holy Ghost assumed on the day of Pentecost. It was that of "tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." This image or figure is very striking and instructive. The tongue of the unrenewed man "is a fire, a world of iniquity—full of deadly poison—no man can tame it." So says the Word of God. The tongue, however, of a renewed and sanctified person becomes as powerful for good as it was before for evil. It is probably true, that wherever and whenever the Holy Ghost descends upon an individual, the first perceptible manifestation of it will be through the tongue; it will be attuned to the praise of Him who formed it for a noble purpose. God

has given to all men tongues, and all are responsible for their use. The Holy Ghost also, in its descent, "sat upon each of them,"—all received its power. Notwithstanding this fact, some professed Christians entertain the unscriptural notion, that none but ministers and the most prominent members of the Church are called, or required to make direct and constant effort for the welfare of souls. The Saviour, however, has made no such distinction; but says, without exceptions, "He that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." Let it, then, be remembered, that no man, in any condition or circumstance, "liveth unto himself alone;" he is living either to the injury or to the benefit of others. It is an encouraging fact, that persons under all conceivable circumstances, who have been faithful witnesses for Jesus, and his "power on earth to forgive sins," have received the approving seal of Heaven, in that, through their efforts, the spiritually blind have been made to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk. It may be inferred from this, that God is well pleased that his people should make faithful efforts to gather souls to Christ, since he thus sanctions and blesses their labours. O what a privilege as well as duty is this, to be "workers together with God!" Hea-

ven could bestow no greater honor. And yet how few appreciate it!

That all are required to use their individual gifts for God, may be seen in the parable of the talents. "To one is given five talents, to another two, to another one, to every man according to his several ability." When the day of reckoning came, each one was called to a strict and impartial account. He who had received the one talent, did not waste or abuse it. No! he carefully preserved and returned it to his lord. But, for his *neglect* to use it, he was "cast into outer darkness." Thus we see that a neglect to use our talents for usefulness is a sin of such magnitude, as to ensure the eternal destruction of our souls. Fellow-Christian! start not at the assertion; it is a momentous truth, and one that will flash with electric power across our souls when the light of eternity shall beam upon us. How important, then, that all our personal duties and responsibilities should be considered in that light, and that we should discharge them in reference to the great day of retribution.

In neglecting to live and labour for God, we not only hazard our own eternal welfare, but we become instrumental in plunging others into perdition, whom we should have been the means of saving. O, then, if you would not be the mur-

derer of souls, and have them cry out against you in eternal burnings, see that you labour to save them ! “I charge every one of you,” says Baxter, “upon your allegiance to God, as you will very shortly answer the contrary at your peril, that you will neither refuse nor neglect this most necessary duty. If you are not willing to do it now you know it to be so great a duty, you are rebels, and no true subjects of Jesus Christ.”

God has placed before us all the motives which can be drawn from heaven, earth, and hell, to induce us to engage in the work of saving souls. He has also revealed to us in his word, and by his Spirit and his providences, the time and manner of performing it; and it should be the study of every Christian to know and to do this work in God’s time, in God’s Spirit, and in God’s way. As the sinner who refuses to repent and be converted, is in danger of eternal damnation; so that professed Christian who knows his Master’s will, and does it not, is in danger of being cast out with the unprofitable servant. The apostle James says, “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” Such a one is as really a sinner as he who violates any of the precepts of the decalogue. It is a matter of but little

importance to the soul that lies under the curse of an offended God, what particular sin procured that curse. The sin of omission,—of refusing to do good,—is as damning in its nature as the sin of commission. This is taught us in the solemn words of the Bible:—"Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." O, Christian reader, be warned, be entreated to come up to the help of the Lord with all thy might, lest the fearful anathema pronounced against guilty Meroz be thy portion. Time is short and fleeting; what is done, must be done quickly. If our dwelling were on fire, we should not be indifferent or slothful; and as our souls and those of our neighbours are of more value than any earthly possession, so should a corresponding zeal be exercised to secure their salvation.

God has inseparably connected our personal happiness with the discharge of our individual duties to our fellow-creatures. "Do good, thereby good shall come unto thee." "The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever

and ever." "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." In view of such encouragement, how strange it is that Christians should need urging to live and labour for the welfare of others! The selfish heart can never experience the luxury which flows from obedience to the injunction, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." The following anecdote happily illustrates this passage:—"Mr. Howe, when chaplain to Cromwell, was applied to for protection by men of all parties, in those eventful times; and it is said that he never refused his assistance to any person of worth, whatever might be his religious tenets. 'Mr. Howe,' said the Protector to his chaplain, 'you have asked favours for everybody besides yourself; pray when does your turn come?' 'My turn, my Lord Protector,' said Mr. Howe, 'is always come, when I can serve another.'"

Thus it is with the Christian; it is always his turn and time to receive benefit when he can benefit others.

In a recently published volume, relating to this duty, we find this eloquent passage among the concluding remarks:—"How benign would

be the influence of a faithful discharge of this duty on the personal piety of Christians! It would keep in habitual exercise the most pure and elevated class of benevolent emotions. It would keep the truth, in its most affecting relations and bearings, constantly before the mind, and create a powerful sense of obligation to lead daily a holy life. It would exceedingly increase the happiness of Christians. They have, for the most part, but little religious enjoyment, because they do so little to save others, and of course have so little scope for prayer and for the exercise of holy feeling. Let them but abound in this work of love, and their hearts will be enlarged in prayer and praise, and they will thus find new evidence of their own conformity to God."

Not only is it for the interest of the Christian to labour for the sinner's welfare, but he is expected to do so. The eyes of the wicked are upon him, and if he make no effort to save them, they will have but little confidence in his professions of piety. Bear this in mind, Christian professor. The sinner expects you to labour for his salvation. The following fact corroborative of this statement, came under the observation of the writer a few years since. An unconverted youth of serious disposition, attended a camp-meeting at Eastham, near Bos-

ton. He expected, in going to that meeting, to meet with many who would, unasked by him, converse with him on the subject of his soul's salvation. He stayed through the whole time of the meeting, and no one personally and faithfully interested himself in his spiritual welfare. When the meeting broke up, he returned to his pious mother, and told her the sad tale. Said he, "I expected, among so many Christians, I should be talked with about religion, and the salvation of my soul, but I was not." The mother's heart was pained with this intelligence, and desired it might be published, as a warning to professed Christians *not to neglect personal effort* for the salvation of every soul within the reach of their influence.

General effort, though good in its place, is not enough; there must be direct and particular effort. This is powerful. Few sinners can withstand it, when made by a consistent and devoted Christian. In the Memoirs of the devoted Harlan Page, we find a testimony to the utility and power of this kind of dealing with souls, given by a young mechanic. "On New-Year's day," said he, "I reflected that I had never attended a monthly concert of prayer in this city, and determined that for once I would go. I went early, found only the sexton in the room,

and sat down. Soon there came in a plain man, who spoke very pleasantly to the sexton, and then, coming and sitting by my side, after a kind salutation, said, 'I trust you love the Saviour?' The question instantly filled my eyes with tears. *I had been preached to at arms-length all my days in New-Hampshire; but this was the first time in my life that ever a Christian thus kindly and directly put such a question to my heart.* We conversed considerably together, in the course of which, at his request, I gave him my name and residence. *The next day he came to my shop, and brought the tract, 'Way to be Saved,' which he thought I would like to read.* He called again and again. I became interested in him, and the next Sabbath joined his Sabbath-School, was brought, as I hope, to Christ, and soon united with the church." How true it is, that "the lips of the righteous feed many!" Young converts, especially, exhibit a powerful commentary on the truths of God in this respect. Their looks, their spirit, their words and actions, all tell upon the hearts and consciences of those about them. What a pity that any should lose their "first love," and cease to labour for the direct benefit of the sinner! God does not speak through the cold and heartless professor as he did to that young mechanic through the

warm-hearted Harlan Page. So whoever would reach an impenitent heart, and divert it from its evil course, must labour in the name and strength of the Almighty. In this way the young stripling with his sling and stone may lay the boasting giant at the feet of Jesus. Thus, in every age of the world, the saints have been mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Thus they may continue to be, having the promise of God "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

And now, dear reader, we shall endeavour in the succeeding chapters to spread out more fully the subject of Christian effort, hoping, in some way, to reach every heart. In doing so, we shall aim more particularly to instruct and encourage you by the presentation of various facts and incidents, rather than by theory and argument. Few, except master-spirits, can hope to do good by much theorizing; so we have chosen this course, believing it the best which we could take for the attainment of the desired object. It cannot be denied that in the multitude of counsellors and witnesses, which we shall cause to speak in this volume, there is wisdom. Many of them possess the wisdom which has been taught by age and experience; others possess the wisdom and

knowledge of many worldly sciences ; and all or most of them have shared in that wisdom which is from God—"pure, peaceable, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." And we hope, through their united testimony, the reader will be enabled to derive some lasting benefit, and especially encouraged to gather fruit unto eternal life.

"The vineyard of the Lord
Before his labr'ers lies :
And lo ! we see the vast reward
Which waits us in the skies—

"Where all our toils are o'er,
Our suffering and our pain ;
Who meet on that eternal shore,
Shall never part again."

CHAPTER II.

PARENTS' DEPARTMENT—CONVERSION OF CHILDREN.

IN this chapter we wish particularly to interest and encourage Christian parents to labour for and expect the conversion of their children. The work of parental instruction should commence with the first dawning of intelligence. The science of religion—of loving God—is more easily learned by the child than any other science, if it is rightly taught: this question, however, we will leave to be considered in a succeeding chapter. We shall present at this point a few facts relative to the manner and success of pious parents who have arduously laboured for the salvation of their children. There are so many pleasing incidents of this description, that volumes might be given instead of a single chapter. We shall, therefore, endeavour to select a few which will exhibit in some degree the operations of the Holy Spirit upon the parent's heart, and how, under that influence, parents have become labourers with God in the salvation of their children.

In Pike's "Guide for Young Disciples" we find the following:—"I have known," said a pious father, "the grace of God for nearly thirty

years ; but, in spite of all my advice, my five sons and two daughters, all grown up, ran on in the broad way to destruction. This cost me many a prayer and tear, yet I saw no fruit of all my labours. In January last I dreamed that the day of judgment was come ; I saw the Judge on his great white throne, the holy angels sitting around him, and all nations gathered before him. I and my wife were on the right hand, but I could not see my children. I then thought I must go and seek them ; so I went to the left hand, and found them all standing together, tearing their hair, beating their breasts, and cursing the day that they were born. As soon as they saw me, they all caught hold of me, and said, ‘O, father, we will part no more!’ I said, ‘My dear children, I am come to try, if possible, to get you out of this dismal situation!’ So I took them all with me ; but when we were come within a bow-shot of the Judge, I thought He cast an angry look, and said, ‘What do thy children with thee now ? they would not take thy warning when upon earth : they shall not share the crown with thee. Depart, ye cursed!’ At these words I awoke, bathed in tears.

“A few days after this, as we were sitting all together on a Sabbath evening, I related my dream to them. No sooner did I begin, but first

one, then another, yea, all of them, burst into tears, and God fastened conviction on their hearts. Five of them are now rejoicing in God their Saviour. I believe God is at work with the other two; so that I doubt not he will give them also to my prayers!"

This good old saint, before he exchanged time for eternity, had the happiness of seeing the remainder of his children converted to the truth as it is in Jesus, and adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour by useful lives.

We have given the preceding sketch for two important reasons; first, as an encouragement to pious parents to persevere in their efforts for the salvation of their children; second, because the dream brings up to the mind a powerful Bible motive, to labour in view of the awful retributions of a judgment-day. How heart-rending is the thought, that

"Parents and children there may part,
May part to meet no more!"

In order to avert such a fearful doom, we would especially beseech parents to give themselves no rest, day or night, until, with themselves, their children are also found in the covenant of God's grace. The sainted Carvosso did not fully see and apply the promises of God in

reference to his children's welfare until some years after his conversion, when his attention was called to it through the remarks of a pious friend ; and as it stands in connexion with the conversion of their children, we present it to our readers. "Returning one night," says Carvosso, "from Redruth, in company with a pious friend, he told me he had the unspeakable happiness, the night before, to witness the conversion of his young daughter, while he held her in his arms. I informed him I had two children who were getting up to mature age, but I was grieved to say I had not yet seen any marks of a work of God upon their minds. His reply I shall never forget :—' Brother, has not God promised to pour his Spirit upon thy seed, and his blessing upon thy offspring ?' The words went through me in an unaccountable manner ; they seemed to take hold of my heart. I felt as if I had not done my duty, and resolved to make a new effort in prayer. I had always prayed for my children ; but now I grasped the promise with the hand of faith, and retired daily at special seasons to put the Lord to his word. I said nothing of what I felt, or did, to any one but the Searcher of hearts.

"About a fortnight after I had been thus engaged with God, being at work in the field, I

received a message from my wife, informing me that I was wanted within. When I entered the house, my wife told me, 'Grace is above stairs, apparently distressed for something; but nothing can be got from her, but that she must see father.' Judge of my feelings when I found my daughter a weeping penitent at the feet of Jesus. On seeing me she exclaimed, 'O, father, I am afraid I shall go to hell!' The answer of my full heart was, 'No, glory be to God, I am not afraid of that now!' She said she had felt the load of sin about a fortnight, and that now she longed to find Christ. I pointed her to the true Physician, and she soon found rest, through faith in the atoning blood.

"My eldest son had hitherto been utterly careless about the things of God, and associated with youths of a similar disposition of mind; but now he became the subject of a manifest change. He cast off his old companions; and one Sunday afternoon, just before I was going to meet my class, he came to me with a sorrowful mind, and expressed his desire to go with me to the class-meeting; he did go, and that day cast in his lot with the people of God; and blessed be his holy name, they both continue to this day."

Soon after the above, Mr. Carvosso speaks again of the conversion of another child, as fol-

lows :—" I now began to feel a particular concern for the salvation of my younger son. I laid hold by faith on the same promise which I had before done, when pleading for my other children, and went to the same place to call upon my God in his behalf. One day while I was wrestling with God in mighty prayer for him, these words were applied with power to my mind, 'There shall not a hoof be left behind.' I could pray no more ; my prayer was lost in praises ; in shouts of joy, and 'Glory, glory, glory ! the Lord will save all my family !' While I am writing this, the silent tears flow down from my eyes. His life was quite moral ; I could not reprove him for any outward sin. In his leisure hours his delight was in studying different branches of useful knowledge. But this, though good in its place, was not religion ; I knew his heart was yet estranged from God. After the answer I had in prayer, I waited some time, hoping to see the change effected in him as it was in his sister and brother ; but as it was not taking place according to my expectations, I felt my mind deeply impressed with the duty of taking the first opportunity of opening my mind to him, and talking closely to him about eternal things. I accordingly came to him on one occasion when he was, as usual, engaged with his books ; and with my heart

deeply affected, I asked him if it was not time for him to enter upon a life of religion. I told him with tears, that I then felt my body was fast failing, and that if anything would distress my mind in a dying hour, it would be the thought of closing my eyes in death before I saw him converted to God. This effort the Lord was pleased to bless; the truth took hold of his heart; he went with me to the class-meeting, and soon obtained the knowledge of salvation by the remission of his sins. This was a matter of great joy and rejoicing to me and my dear wife; we had now the unspeakable happiness of seeing all our dear children converted to God, and travelling in the way to heaven with us."

Thus parents should always be intent on the conversion of their children, the younger the better. It is a dangerous and most fatal error for parents to suppose that children cannot at a very early age understand the way of salvation. At how early an age children pass the line of accountability, is quite uncertain. God alone can know this; but it is probably true, that some pass it much earlier than others. It is feared many dear children, even of professedly Christian parents, die in a state of sinful impenitency. Dear reader, are you a parent? O think—feel—labour for the eternal welfare of your child be-

fore it is too late ! Consider what it will be to look on your poor children in eternal flames, and that through your neglect ! Some parents are much prejudiced against the idea of little children being converted ; this is no new thing. The early disciples of the Saviour were somewhat influenced with the same feeling. They manifested this spirit by rebuking those who brought their young children to Christ. But when the blessed Jesus saw it, "he was much displeased," and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." He also manifested his peculiar regard for such by taking them up in his arms, and putting his hands upon them and blessing them. This example of the Saviour should banish forever all the prejudice and skepticism which may have been hitherto lurking in the minds of Christian parents respecting early piety. Besides this, we have the most abundant proofs from many still living, that the grace of God which bringeth salvation has been experienced in very early childhood, and retained and enjoyed through each succeeding period of life, and now lights up the soul in time of old age with bright hopes of blooming anew in the paradise of God. And in the past history of the Church, a large portion of her most learned and pious ministers were

converted to God in their childhood, many of whom, like Samuel, were before their birth consecrated to the service of the Great Head of the Church.

As we give in another chapter some thoughts on the early religious training of children, we shall close this with the following interesting sketch, which exhibits very minutely the workings of the Holy Spirit. It is contained in Mrs. Palmer's book, entitled "The Way of Holiness."

"Sabbath evening, June 29, 18—. Memorable period! I am at a loss for language wherewith to record the abundant joy of my heart. On the evening of this date, my beloved S— received clear witness of adoption into the family of Christ.

"For some time past she has manifested increasing interest in spiritual things. She has also been more successful in governing her disposition, which is naturally very resolute. When at times it has gained the ascendancy, and I have endeavoured to show her how unlovely and sinful the indulgence of wrong tempers is in the sight of God, she has wept, and prayed for forgiveness, and earnestly asked for a heart which would incline her to everything lovely and pure in the sight of God and man.

"On Sabbath evening, previous to going with her to her room, I had an unusually sweet sea-

son in waiting before the Lord. It was necessary that I should remain at home, but I had not settled in my contemplations the manner of spending the evening. In seeking for direction, I asked that the Lord would so take the lead of my mind, and all connecting circumstances, that the evening might be remembered in *time* and *eternity*, as one of the most important in my Christian history.

“I shall never forget the request, for it required such a struggle of faith to claim the assurance that I had the petition I had desired of God. Satan withstood with the suggestion, that there was no *reasonable* foundation for the fulfilment of such an expectation. Human probabilities were all against the indulgence of the idea of anything unusual; and why should I imagine that God would condescend to go out of his ordinary way of working, when there was nothing in the intimation of existing circumstances to warrant such an expectation? But the Holy Spirit said, ‘*All things are possible with God, and all things are possible to him that believeth.*’ With this I was strengthened to claim the assurance that the desire of my heart should be granted. But I did not receive at the time the least intimation of the *manner* in which God would prove his faithfulness.

“Soon afterward I accompanied my daughter to her room, and before assisting her to undress, I read to her an interesting account of little Mary P. Clark, from the *Christian Advocate and Journal*. She was much affected, and exclaimed,—‘What a sweet, good child she must have been!’

“‘Mary must have had a new heart, or she could not have been such a sweet good child,’ I observed. ‘And you may be sure, dear S—, that the Lord is just as willing to give you a new heart as he was to bestow such a precious gift upon Mary.’

“‘O! I *wish* I had it! O, I want it *now*!’ she exclaimed, with increasing emotion.

“‘Well, your heavenly Father wants to give it to you *now*, my daughter. He says, ‘*Ask*, and you *shall* receive;’ ‘Come unto *me*;’ and he wants you to come unto him *now*. He is saying to you, this moment, ‘Try me, and prove me!’ Now, try the Lord, and prove him. See if he will not give you a new heart. That heart of yours *already* belongs to God, and he requires it of you; will he not take it? He just now says, ‘*Give* me thy heart.’ You well know how it would be, should you ask your mother for anything which she knew to be for your good. Would she not give it to you? And now how

much more willing is your heavenly Father to give the Holy Spirit to them that *ask* him? He knows you *need* a new heart, and he only waits for *you* to come to him, and ask, and you *shall* receive. We will now kneel, and ask that God will receive you, and while you give yourself away to him, we will beseech him to give you a new heart.'

"With looks expressive of unutterable desire, she assented, and we knelt together. I endeavoured to be a mouth for her in confessing her need of a Saviour, and in earnest supplication for pardon and adoption. Her fervent responses spoke assuringly to my heart, as in verity the language of her over-burdened spirit. I felt most consciously that I beheld in her experience the significant expression verified, 'The Spirit maketh intercession with groanings unutterable.' The great deep of her heart seemed broken up; and the violence of her grief was so great, that I was fearful the excitement might prevent that calm, decisive action of faith, by which the soul throws itself on the mercy of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Yet, notwithstanding this, I felt so desirous that every step should be distinctly marked with the most incontestable evidence of the Holy Spirit's leadings, both for the establishment of my

own faith, and the permanency of hers, that I resolved, though my nature shrank from being instrumental in probing her wounded spirit more deeply, to continue my efforts yet a little longer, in endeavouring to discover to her a more thorough knowledge of her need of a Saviour.

“ We had risen from prayer, and I said, ‘ Did you ever think, dear S—, that all the sins you ever committed were written down in the book of the Lord ? ’ I then told her of a youthful relative, who, a few moments previous to his death, repeated the hymn ;—

‘ Almighty God ! thy piercing eye
Strikes through the shades of night,
And our most secret actions lie
All open to thy sight.

‘ There’s not a sin which we commit,
Or wicked word we say,
But in that dreadful book is writ,
Against the judgment-day.

‘ And must the sins which I have done
Be read and publish’d there ?
Be all exposed before the Son,
While men and angels hear !

‘ Lord, at thy feet ashamed I lie ;
Upward I dare not look ;
Pardon my sins before I die,
And blot them from thy book.’

“ The effect produced on her mind while repeating these lines I can never forget. The

Lord was eminently present, and spoke, through the medium of the words, to her inmost heart. As I progressed, her emotions were increasingly demonstrative of the fact, that she felt herself standing as a condemned criminal before God. And when I came to the last stanza, the language of her quivering spirit seemed to say, ‘Spare, I can bear no more.’

“Never before, for other than my own soul, had I felt such a weight of responsibility. It was in part induced from the conviction that it was the design of my heavenly Father that the conversion of my dear child might depend, instrumentally, upon the strength of my faith. The unutterable solicitude educed from this conviction influenced me to pause, in prayerful suspense, before the Lord. Her spirit seemed almost overwhelmed : and O, with what longing of soul did I wait for heavenly direction !

“She knelt for the performance of her evening’s devotion, during the continuance of this waiting suspense with myself. Her unusual fervour and tone of voice seemed to say, that she was quite unconscious of the presence of any one besides the God whom she supplicated. After continuing much longer than usual in prayer, she arose, and was prepared for the repose of the night. But her fervour of spirit had not in

the least abated. As she threw herself on the bed, she expressed her unwillingness to give up, by saying, imploringly, ‘O! ma, keep talking to me!’

“I laid myself down beside her. O, the unutterable interest of that hour! I felt that her inmost soul was inexpressibly athirst for salvation. The conviction, with increasing certainty, possessed my heart, that she was about to be born of the Spirit. And who but a parent, similarly situated, could imagine feelings of like interest? That our child should thus, in her infant days, be born of the Spirit, and adopted into the family of Christ! The honour seemed too great, and to grasp it seemed to require the exercise of faith correspondingly great.

“It was but a short time before she was again in the attitude of a suppliant beside the bed. With my eye fixed upon Jesus, and my heart continually pleading the promise, ‘I will instruct thee,’ I endeavoured to direct this precious lamb to the fold of Christ, by showing her the simplicity of the way of faith, while my own soul was every moment gathering increasing strength.

“Soon afterward I said, ‘My daughter, I will pray silently, and you may also continue asking the Lord, and O! I am sure he will give you a new heart!’ How sweet was the assurance to my

soul, that the Holy Spirit would take of the things of God, and reveal them even unto babes. The sentiment, ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord,’ never more thoroughly penetrated my heart. There was one point in my travail of soul for her, where my faith most consciously laid hold. It was while saying, ‘She is already Thine!’ and now, by the remembrance of that hour, when she was most solemnly given away in covenant to Thee, and Thou didst condescend to assure my heart so fully of thine acceptance of the offering, let her case come up in remembrance before thee. Thus far she *is already* thine—numbered with thy covenant people; and now wilt thou not give *her* to feel most assuredly that she is taken into covenant relation with thee? May her young heart know that thou dost accept and seal her thine.

“It was while thus pleading that my faith most *distinctly* laid hold. I pause here; for here is the burden of my heart in the recordings of this hour. God is a covenant-keeping God. His name is JEHOVAH. And by this name would he now be known and glorified in his covenant people, and their seed after them. A solemn, unfathomed responsibility rests upon God’s chosen ones relative to their children. Of this I had

never been so fully aware, until passing through the exercise here given.

“She is *already* Thine! Here was the point where my faith, with an unyielding grasp, laid hold. It was here my bounding spirit could say,

‘My prayer hath power with God; the grace
Unspeakable I now receive.’

“So sure was I now that what I had asked *was* according to the will of God, and that I *had* the petition I had desired of him, that I continued a moment longer praising God for the answer, though my heart assured me that my dear child was longing for me to rise, in order to communicate her joy.

“As I arose, she exclaimed, with thrilling emotion, ‘O, ma, I feel as if I had a new heart! O, I think I have! I am almost sure! O, I *am* sure! Yes, I *am* sure!’ She then began praising the Lord, with expressions altogether beyond her former capacity. I could not but regard her singularly mature expressions, so beyond her former self, as a development of renewed mental powers. A new nature had been given, and my condescending heavenly Father permitted me to have such conclusive testimony that my heart may ever say, relative to her change,—

‘Meridian evidence puts doubt to flight.’

“‘O, praise the Lord!’ was for some time the

language of every breath. 'How truly the heaven-inspired language of the new-born spirit!' thought I, as I listened to one but little over six years of age, who was unaccustomed to mingle with those similarly exercised with herself.

"From one expression I had reason to conclude that her mind had some time previously been exercised relative to this change. It was this: 'O, ma, how *much* I have of late thought of those words you published a long time ago!' 'What were they, my daughter?' She quickly, and with much emphasis, replied,—

"'Give me thy heart!' we hear Him say;
Lord, we thy mandate will obey,
We come, to tread the narrow way,
To be thy faithful followers!

"She then began to sing in sweet, and, I think, as lovely strains as ever I heard, to the tune of Old Hundred, the Doxology:—

'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!'

"I accompanied her voice, with a heart bounding with unutterable joy. It really seemed to me that it was not in unmeaning, or unanswered invocation, that she had called upon the heavenly host to assist in ascribing praise to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. After she had ceased

hymning the words, she returned, and, in solemn measure, said, ‘Yes!—

‘Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him, all creatures here below!’

Yes, everybody ought to praise him!’ She paused, and then said, ‘O! I feel as if I wanted to tell everybody. O! I could tell a stranger. *Everybody* ought to love the Saviour. I love him with my whole heart. O, how happy I am!’”

“Her dear father was absent. But she was so desirous to communicate the joy of her new-born spirit to him, that I sent for him. My heart and eyes fill at the recollection of the scene when this happy father was permitted to clasp to his heart his rejoicing daughter—his new-born child. The remembrance of the day of her birth into the natural world bears but little comparison. To witness the answer to what had been the increasing desire of his heart from the earliest existence of his child, O! this was happiness not to be described.

“I thought well to explain to her how she might *retain* the blessing, and said—‘Now, it was by giving your heart away to God that you received a new heart; and the only way to keep it, is to keep giving.’ She caught the words from my lips, and said, ‘Yes, keep giving it, giving it all the time.’

“About two hours had passed, and she again lay down for repose. I placed the light in a convenient position, and lay down beside her, with the blessed Bible in my hand, and began turning over the leaves, with the intention of selecting portions suited to her state. ‘What are you looking for, dear ma?’ ‘For something good,’ I responded. ‘O!’ said she ‘it is *all* good.’ While I read, the word of the Lord seemed indeed to be sweet to her taste.

“After reading for some time, and she had ceased to respond, I supposed she had fallen asleep, and ceased reading aloud at the words, ‘We love Him because he first loved us.’ She started up, and, with much interest, inquired, ‘Why do you not read on, dear ma?’ ‘Because I thought you had fallen asleep, or were sleepy.’ ‘O,’ said she, with much emphasis, ‘we love Him, because he first loved us! We did not love him, but he loved us!’

“It is now the third day since her change, and she still gives blessed evidence of its reality. She has always been very precious to us; but now, a new and yet more endearing tie binds her more closely to our hearts. Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!”

CHAPTER III.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

ON the early religious training of children much has been said and written, and much more might be. It is a subject that should command the attention of the master-spirits of every age, and even then it would not be exhausted. It is one on which the light of Divine revelation should be brought fully to bear. This must be done, or all instruction will be dark, and all efforts abortive.

Rev. J. A. James, in his "Church in Earnest," has a chapter on "Family Religion," from which we make the following extract:—"There must be a right understanding, and a constant recollection of the nature and design of the domestic constitution. Families are the nurseries both of the State and of the Church; and if this be true, then the design of the domestic economy must be to form the good citizen and the true Christian. No doubt the present and future welfare of the individual members of each household, their right conduct towards each other, and their own good training for any domestic relations they may sustain, are the proximate

objects to be sought; but the ultimate end is the formation of character in which patriotism, loyalty, and piety, shall be beautifully united and harmonized. Well-instructed, well-ordered, and well-governed families, are the springs which, from their retirements, send forth the tributary streams that make up, by their confluence, the majestic flow of national greatness and prosperity. No state can be prosperous where family order and subordination are generally neglected; every one *will* be prosperous, whatever be its form of political government, where these are maintained. Disorderly families are the sources of vicious characters, pestilent criminals, factious demagogues, turbulent rebels, and tyrannical oppressors—who are their neighbours' torment and their country's scourge.

“But every family has also a sacred character belonging to it, which ought ever to be sustained; I mean, it is a preparatory school, both for the Church militant and the Church triumphant, where the immortal soul is to be trained up, by the influence of a pious education, for the fellowship of saints on earth, and for the felicities of a higher association still, in heaven. The mother, as she presses her babe to her bosom, or sees the little group sporting around the hearth; and the father, as he col-

lects the circle round his chair or his table, as he directs their education, or selects for them their future occupation ; should never forget to say to themselves, ‘These are given to us, that we may train them up to be useful members of society, and holy members of the Church. God and our country will demand them at our hands. Yea, the destinies of the world will, in some measure, be affected by them, and the present and all future generations of mankind have claims upon us in reference to the training of our children.’ Yes, those children are something more than living domestic play-things ; something more than animated household ornaments, who, by their elegant accomplishments and graceful manners, shall adorn the habitation, and constitute a father’s pride, a mother’s boast : they are the future generation of our country, and the next race of friends or enemies to the cause of God on earth. The family, then, I repeat, is the mould of the State and the Church,—where the members of both are cast and formed,—and this ought never, for a single day, to be forgotten.

“Delightful as it may be to hear the infant prattle ; to witness the gambols of childhood’s joyous years ; to mark the growing development of faculty, and the gradual formation of character,

during youth's advance to manhood ; interesting as it is to see the slow unfolding of the human flower,—a solemn sense of responsibility ought, with all this, to come over the mind. It is an awful expression, 'I am a parent !' for what is this but saying, 'I have immortal souls intrusted to my care, whose destiny for eternity will be affected by my conduct ?' Fond mother, look at that babe hanging on thy breast, and those other children sporting around thy knee ; and thou, the father of the group, watching, with a parent's and a husband's swelling heart, thy wife and the mother of thy children, and indulging only joyous emotions and sportive expressions, pause, ponder, reflect ! millions of ages from that moment of domestic ecstasy, every one of those little happy creatures will be either in heaven or in hell—will be a seraph or a fiend—will be enduring inconceivable torment, or enjoying ineffable felicity ; and much, as to which it shall be, will depend upon you. Overwhelming thought ! *Is it true ? Can it be true ?* It is ; and you admit it, at least by profession. Then, I say again, how tremendous the responsibility of a parent ! This is earnestness, to have this fact written on our very heart ; to see it ever standing out in visible characters before our eyes ; to carry it with us everywhere, and

into everything ; to be ever saying to ourselves, ‘My child is immortal, and his eternal destiny, in great measure, depends upon me. I shall be the means, perhaps, of raising him to heaven, or sinking him to perdition. I am educating him to be an associate with the devil and his angels, in everlasting fire ; or a companion with the innumerable company of angels, in glory everlasting. O God, help me ! for who is sufficient for these things ?’

As it is not our object to theorize much in this solemn matter, we will endeavour to bring up from the history of the past, for our further consideration, some interesting facts, incidents, and testimonies, which shall place before the mind of our readers a bird’s-eye view of what constitutes a religious training of the young.

Mrs. Palmer, in her book entitled, “Faith and its Effects,” has some remarks in reference to our present subject, which we trust will be profitable to the reader. She says, in reply to inquiries of a friend about her family management, etc., as follows :—“We have deemed it important,

‘Never to take the harsher way,
When love may do the deed.’

“And we have endeavoured to cherish in their young hearts that love and confidence which you observe. It is certainly far more desirable

to rule by love than by fear, if such a thing may be. And it is my opinion that this may be done to a degree quite beyond what many parents may imagine. God is love; and it is our earnest prayer, that the atmosphere in which our children live and move may be that of love. We have dedicated our house to God, and believe he hears our prayer when we ask that his presence may abide with us, so that every one that enters our dwelling may feel the hallowing influence of the Spirit of holiness.

“Before the routine of domestic duty for the day commences, I feel it a blessed privilege to present each member of our household individually before God. After having presented myself, with all my interests, temporal and spiritual, afresh to him through Christ, I daily plead the promise, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring.’ I try to claim the fulfilment of this promise, and believe myself successful.

“We have dedicated our children to God, with an intention of devoting them in some special manner to his service, and are endeavouring to have their moral and religious training all directed to this point—usefulness in the Church of Christ. We believe that the Lord, in some special manner, recognizes the surrender, and

gives the more direct influences of the Holy Spirit as a consequence of their being set apart for his service. They love to talk about spiritual things, and from the dawn of reason have manifested much interest, and sometimes deep emotions, while I conversed with them."

Speaking of her little boy, she says,—“A few months since, little W—— asked this question, ‘What is it to give my heart to God?’ Bishop H—— was with us, and he took the child on his knee, and with most heavenly sweetness told him, in a manner suited to his capacity, just what it was to give his heart to God. After which, W——, in a solemn and impressive manner, said, ‘I give my heart to Jesus Christ.’ This was a memorable period, and he since says that he has given his heart to God, and I would not dare say he has not done so. When he is asked, as is often the case with such little creatures, ‘What do you intend to be?’ His almost invariable reply, whether to worldlings or others, is, ‘I mean to be a minister, *if God will make me one.*’

“We have set him apart for that work, with the prayerful desire that he may be called of God, as was Aaron. ‘The harvest is great, but the labourers are few.’ In view of the need of faithful labourers, it seems most reasonable, and

not unauthorized by the spirit of the word, that pious parents should thus set their children apart, not with the idea that they are to decide the matter, but to order their entire moral and religious training in such a manner as may best fit them for the service of the sanctuary; and then, if the thus consecrated one is not sure in after life that he is 'moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel,' he will, by pious culture, have been fitted for other work in the vineyard of the Lord.

"But if a case should occur in which a person thus dedicated to the ministry should not be called, it would be unlike any case I have yet met with. In reference to little W——, we cannot help treasuring up in our hearts these indications that he has received something like a baptism into the spirit of what may be his work, and we take courage. This morning he said, 'I wish I was in 'Exico,' (Mexico;) they fight there!' I felt troubled at his saying what seemed so unlike himself; and chidingly said, 'Why, W——, they are wicked there because they fight, and if they do not take care they will soon all go to the bad place together.' 'I thought I might go and tell them that it is *wicked to fight*,' he replied. On Sabbath morning a boy was crying 'Sunday Morning News'

past the door. W—— came to me with a saddened countenance, and said, ‘Do you not think I had better run and tell him that it is wicked to sell papers on Sunday? it may be he does not know how wicked it is.’ This is but a specimen of the way in which he often talks. I think you will with us conclude, that God is not unmindful of the consecration which we have made of our children to his service. And it is because we think this a most important matter that I have so much at length answered your inquiries.”

Why, we would ask, may not a praying mother of our day present the son of her desire as her choicest offering to God for the performance of temple-service, as did Hannah of ancient days? If such offerings were more frequent, we should doubtless have more thoroughly furnished ambassadors for Christ than we now have. Think of this, ye praying parents, especially when ye pray the Lord to thrust forth labourers into his harvest.

From the Life of Rev. Jonathan Edwards, we learn that he was careful and thorough in the government of his children. He took special care to *begin this work in season*, and kept a watchful eye over them, that he might admonish them of the *first* wrong step, and to direct

them in the right way. He would also labour with them singly and particularly about their soul's concerns, warning, instructing, and directing, as he saw occasion.

His wife likewise added her holy example and precepts to his in the training of their children. "If any correction was needed, it was not her manner to give it in a passion. And when she had occasion to reprove and rebuke, she would do it in a few words, without heat and noise, with all calmness and gentleness of mind. She need speak but once, and she was cheerfully obeyed; murmuring and answering again was not known among them. . As she was sensible that, in many respects, the chief care of forming the minds of children naturally lies on mothers—as they are most with their children at their most pliable age, when they commonly receive impressions by which they are very much formed for life—so she was very careful to do her part in this important business. And when she met with a special difficulty in this matter, or foresaw any, she was wont to apply to Mr. Edwards for advice and assistance; and *on such occasions they would both attend to it as a matter of great importance.* She thought that parents had a great and important duty to do towards their children before they were capable

of government and instruction. For them she constantly and earnestly prayed, and bore them on her heart before God in all her secret and most solemn addresses to him, and that even before they were born.

“Happy are those parents, who, like this pious pair, are equally yoked ; and disposed to *unite* their authority, counsels, prayers, and experience, in the religious education of their children.”

The following extract is from Dr. Adam Clarke’s Memoirs of the Wesley family.

“Mrs. Wesley (mother of the justly celebrated Rev. Messrs John and Charles Wesley) was assiduous in teaching her children their duty to God and to their parents. She had nineteen children, most of whom lived to be educated. *All these were educated by herself.* Their time of going to bed, rising in the morning, dressing, eating, learning, and exercise, she managed by rule, which was never suffered to be broken, unless in case of sickness. From her, Mr. J. Wesley derived all that knowledge in the education of children, which he has detailed so simply, and so successfully enforced. It has been wondered that a man who had no children of his own, could have known so well how they should be managed and educated ; but that wonder will at once cease, when it is recollected

who was his instructress in all things, during his infancy and youth. Mrs. Wesley had little difficulty in breaking the wills of her children. They were early brought, by rational means, under a mild yoke; they were perfectly obsequious to their parents; and were taught to wait their decision in everything they were to have, and in everything they were to perform. They were also taught to ask a blessing upon their food, to behave quietly at family prayers, and to reverence the Sabbath. They were never permitted to command the servants, or to use any words of authority in their addresses to them. Mrs. Wesley charged the servants to do nothing for any of the children, unless they asked it with humility and respect; and the children were duly informed that the servants had such orders. ‘Molly, Robert, be pleased to do so and so,’ was the usual method of request, both from the sons and the daughters; and, because the children behaved thus decently, the domestics revered and loved them. They were never permitted to contend with each other; whatever differences arose, the parents decided, and their decision was never disputed. The consequence was, there were few misunderstandings among them, and no unbrotherly or vindictive passions; and they

had the common fame of being the most loving family in the county of Lincoln! *How much evil may be prevented, and how much good may be done, by judicious management in the education of children!* Mrs. Wesley had explained her own views and conduct in a letter, dated July 24th, 1732; part of which is here given. 'In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will, and bring them to an obedient temper. To inform the understanding is a work of time, and must, with children, proceed by slow degrees, as they are able to bear it. But the subjecting the will is a thing that must be done at once, and the sooner the better; for, by neglecting timely correction, they will contract a stubbornness and obstinacy which are hardly ever after conquered, and never without using such severity as would be as painful to me as to the child. In the esteem of the world, they pass for kind and indulgent, whom I call cruel, parents; who permit their children to get habits which they know must be afterwards broken. Nay, some are so stupidly fond, as in sport to teach their children to do things, which, in a while after, they have severely beaten them for doing. When a child is corrected, it must be conquered; and this will be no hard matter to do, if it be not grown

head-strong by too much indulgence. And when the will of a child is totally subdued, and it is brought to revere and stand in awe of its parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertencies must be passed by. Some should be overlooked and taken no notice of, and others mildly reprovèd; but no wilful transgression ought ever to be forgiven children without chastisement, less or more, as the nature and circumstances of the offence may require. *I insist upon conquering the wills of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual.* But when this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind. I cannot yet dismiss the subject. As self-will is the root of all sin and misery, so whatever cherishes this in children, ensures their after wretchedness and irreligion; whatever checks and mortifies it, promotes their future happiness and piety. This is still more evident, if we further consider, that religion is nothing else than the doing the will of God, and not our own; that the one grand impediment to our temporal and eternal

happiness being this selfish will, no indulgences of it can be trivial, no denial unprofitable; *so that the parent who studies to subdue it in his child, works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul.* The parent who indulges it does the devil's work; makes religion impracticable; salvation unattainable; and does all that in him lies to damn his child, soul and body, forever.' "

We will now present the reader a few extracts from "Barker's Parent's Monitor." They are abridged from Dr. Cotton Mather's "Essays to Do Good:"—"Let me daily pray for my children, with the greatest constancy and fervency; yea, let me daily mention each of them by name before the Lord. I would importunately beg for all suitable blessings. Most earnestly would I plead that promise in their behalf, 'Your heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.' O happy children, if, by asking, I can obtain the Holy Spirit for them!

"I would early entertain my children with delightful stories out of the Bible. In familiar conversation I would go through the Bible, when the olive-plants around my table are capable of being so watered; but I would always conclude the history by some lessons of piety to be inferred from them.

“I would be anxious, till I may be able to say of my children, Behold they pray ! I will show them the state of their own souls ; and, on every discovery, will inquire of them, what they think ought now to be their prayer. I will direct them to texts of Scripture, to form their desires in prayer. When they have heard a sermon, I will ask them what they have now to pray for. I will solemnly charge them to pray in private, and often say to each of them, ‘ Child, I hope you do not forget my charge to your about secret prayer,—your crime is very great if you do.’

“I will assign them such books to read as I judge most profitable, obliging them to give me some account of what they read. I will also direct them to write out such things as may be of the greatest benefit to them. I will particularly require them now and then to compose a prayer, and bring it to me, that so I may discern what sense they have of their own everlasting interests.

“When the children are of a proper age, I will sometimes take them with me alone, and converse with them about the state of their souls, their experiences, their proficiency, their temptations : and then pray with them, earnestly entreating that the Lord would bestow his grace

upon them; and thus make them witnesses of the agony with which I am travailing to see the image of Christ formed in them. Certainly they will never forget such exercises as these.

“I will be watchful and cautious about the companions of my children. If they are in danger of being insnared by vicious company, I will earnestly pluck them ‘as brands out of the fire,’ and will try to procure for them fit and useful associates.

“When my children are in trouble, whether sickness or otherwise, I will take advantage of the occasion to set before them the evil of sin, the cause of all our trouble; and will represent to them how fearful a thing it will be to be cast among the damned, who are in unceasing and endless trouble. I will set before them the benefit of an interest in Christ, by which their trouble will be sanctified to them, and they will be prepared for death, and for fulness of joy in a happy eternity.

“I would sometimes oblige the children to retire and ponder on that question, ‘*What should I wish to have done, if I were now dying?*’ After they have given me their own answer, I will take occasion from it to inculcate upon them the lessons of godliness. I would also direct them seriously to realize their own ap-

pearance before the awful judgment-seat of the Lord Jesus Christ, and consider what they have to plead that they may not be sent away into everlasting punishment, and what they have to plead that they may be admitted into the holy city ; I would instruct them what plea to prepare ; show them the gift of infinite grace to the distressed, unworthy sinner, through Jesus Christ, to be received with a thankful faith ; then show them how to prove that their faith is genuine, by their continual endeavour in all things to please Him who is to be their judge, and to serve his kingdom and interest in the world."

The following extract is from "Dr. Dwight's System of Theology :"—

"Every child should be taught from the beginning to fear that great and glorious Being, to whom he owes his existence, his blessings, and his hopes. This will tend to secure him from sin ; strengthen him against the force of temptation, and keep him in the paths of righteousness. Inseparably connected with this is *a sense of accountability*. Every child should know, as soon as he is capable of knowing, that he is a moral being, in a state of probation for his conduct ; that God is an eye-witness of all he thinks, speaks, or does ; and that for all he will be called to judgment. *Every child should soon be*

brought to the knowledge of the Saviour. A profound and reverential regard to truth should be awakened in the mind of a child from the moment when he begins to assert anything. Let a rigid example of speaking truth and of fulfilling promises be set before him by all with whom he corresponds, especially by the parents and family.

“He who wishes his child to become pious, should make it a prime object in their education to check all their inordinate passions ; and should, with equal anxiety, teach them to check, restrain, and subdue themselves. Usually, this work may in early childhood be easily done, but unhappily is too often neglected.

“The passions in the mind, like weeds in a garden, though tender and feeble at first, soon strengthen themselves to such a degree, that to subdue them becomes difficult indeed.

“*Children should be guarded, and taught to guard themselves, with the utmost care, against temptations.* They should be warned and restrained from going to places of evil resort. Give them an early, strong, and habitual expression of their exposure to temptation, accompanied by explicit information of the evils which will certainly result from yielding to its influence. This will prove a safeguard to the child when the parent cannot be present to warn him of danger.

“Children should be taught by example. This has a mighty influence on every part of education. Children do little besides imitating others. Parents who read, will have reading children. Industrious parents will have industrious children. Lying parents will have lying children. Example, therefore, is of the highest possible consequence in this important concern.

“Children should be led to exert their own mind and talents. Without the active exercise of its powers, the mind cannot acquire vigour.”

From “Baxter’s Christian Directory” we make the following extract. Addressing parents he says: “You must be *holy* persons, if you would be holy governors of your families. An enemy of God will not govern a family for God; nor an enemy of holiness, set up a holy order in his house. To this end, be sure that your own souls be entirely subjected unto God, and that you more accurately obey his laws than you expect any inferior should obey your commands. Be sure that you lay up your treasure in heaven, and make the enjoyment of God in glory to be the ultimate commanding end both of the affairs and government of your family, and all things else with which you are intrusted. Maintain God’s authority in your family more carefully than your own. Your own is but his.

“Let spiritual love to your family be predominant ; and let your care be greatest for the saving of their souls, and your compassion greatest for their spiritual miseries. Let your family neither be kept in idleness and flesh-pleasing, nor yet overwhelmed with such a multitude of business, as shall take up and distract their minds, diverting and unfitting them for holy things. As much as possible, settle a constant order of all your business, that every ordinary work may know its time, and confusion may not shut out godliness.”

One more extract which we give is from another learned divine ; he says, “Believe it, every governor of a family is as deeply charged with the souls of those under his government, as any pastor is with the souls of that flock which is committed to his charge ; *nor will the public ministry become fruitful, if that which is sown in public be not watered in private* by conference, examination, and good instruction. What can we more impute the unprofitableness of our ministry to, than to masters’ and parents’ neglect of their duties ? You call our congregations our charge ; and so they are ; *so are your families also your charge.*”

Thus we may present testimonies from the learned and the good of every age ; who are unanimous in their declarations to the importance

of the *early* religious training of children. Having preferred the testimony of such witnesses to our own remarks, we feel a confidence and pleasure in saying to those who may have read these extracts before, that they will find it worth their while to read them again. Such topics can never become insipid to those parents who realize their solemn responsibilities to God and their offspring.

O, could I emulate the zeal
Thou, Lord, dost to thy servants bear!
The troubles, griefs, and burdens feel,
Of souls intrusted to my care!

That taught, according to thy will,
To rule my family aright,
I may th' appointed charge fulfil,
With all my heart, with all my might.

In daily prayer to God commend
The souls whom Christ expired to save,
And think how soon my sway may end,
And all be equal in the grave.

CHAPTER IV.

SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHERS.

IN the following chapter we purpose to call the reader's attention to the Sabbath-school, the design of which is to train immortal minds for usefulness on earth, and eternal happiness in heaven. This design should always be kept in view in the Sabbath-school, and everything else made subservient to it.

The first thing to be sought in behalf of the child is, its conversion to Christ; till this change is effected, the great end of religious training is not accomplished. The Divine command is, to "seek *first* the kingdom of God and its righteousness;" and, "Suffer *little* children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And again, by way of encouragement, it is written, "They that seek me early shall find me." The earlier these inspired instructions are complied with, the better. Children, as well as adults, are possessed of a carnal mind, which cannot discern or comprehend spiritual truths till it is renewed by the Spirit of grace. "The natural man," says the apostle, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,

for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Hence we have an important reason for early conversions, that the child may be enabled to discern and receive "the things of the Spirit of God." Another important reason why early conversion should take place, is the uncertainty of human life. Is it not then highly improper for Christian teachers to suffer their charges to remain for one week quietly in their sins? May not the blood of these young souls be required at the hands of their teachers? O fearful thought! Again another reason for early conversion is, that it will be easier than at any other time of life.

"'Tis easier work if we begin
To seek the Lord betimes
While sinners that grow old in sin
Are harden'd in their crimes."

Again, another reason for early conversion may be found in the fact, that such generally make better Christians through life, than those who are converted at a later age. Rev. John Todd, in his "Sabbath-School Teacher," says: "O! were I to take my choice for helpers in the labours of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, I would rather have a church committed to me, made up of converted children from the Sabbath-school, and thus trained up for the service of God, than

to have a church of a thousand members, formal, stiff, cold, and barren as the aged oak. Blessed is the man who shall be the instrument of the conversion of a single child; he adds a bright star to the moral heavens. Here must we raise up our pillars, here our polished stones, here our strong men, and here those who, on seraph wing, will hasten to declare the name and love of Christ to the very ends of the earth."

Some object to early conversions, fearing that such will be more likely to backslide and dishonour the cause of religion. There has been a time when this opinion was a prevalent one. A few years only have transpired since the Church has had confidence enough in the piety and stability of children and youth, to admit them within her pale. This was a most delusive, fatal error,—one that is in opposition to reason and Scripture. Must a child serve Satan while it is young, for fear it may do so in after life? The wise man says, "Train up a child in the way he should go." We have the word of God to bear us out in saying that, as a general rule, children trained up in the way of piety will not, when they are old, depart from it. Let those who have the care of children know this, and be encouraged to labour for their conversion.

Next to the conversion of the child, the for-

mation of RIGHT HABITS is a matter of the greatest importance. The first of these should be a *devotional* habit, in which the child may grow in grace and in all spiritual knowledge. Seasons for private prayer, meditation, and study of the Sacred Scriptures, should be statedly observed. The Sabbath-school teacher cannot be too faithful in giving proper instructions on this point. These may be made very pleasant and profitable exercises to the youngest child. "Barker's Parent's Monitor" has the following sketch:—

"As I left my room one lovely morning, I was much surprised to find my favourite little Alfred, at the farther end of the passage: instead of running to me with his usual affectionate salutation, he was sullenly destroying a beautiful rose, and surveying me with a reproachful and dejected countenance. Struck with this unusual sight, I tenderly inquired the cause of his distress, and prevailed upon him to return with me to my chamber, when he at length revealed the source of his unhappiness.

" ' You told me last night, that if I prayed to God, he would make me good and happy ; and before I went to sleep, when nobody was in the room, I rose, and did pray unto him ; but I do not feel at all more happy this morning, nor any more inclined to be good than I did yesterday.' "

“‘Can you tell me, my love, how you felt when you prayed, and what you said?’

“After a pause he replied, ‘I felt afraid of God, and thought he would not notice me; but because *you* said he would, I resolved to try; and, as nearly as I can remember, I used these words: ‘O Lord, thou art a very great God, and able to do everything: I beseech thee to look upon me, a little child, and make me good and happy forever and ever. Amen.’ Then I lay down again, but did not feel comfortable, and it was a long time before I could go to sleep; and so, after Sally had dressed me this morning, I would not kneel down to pray at all.’

“‘Well, my dear, I am glad you have told me this; I can now assist you in inquiring *why* your prayer was not answered. And, first, my Alfred forgot what I had so often told him, how very good, and kind, and gracious our heavenly Father is, and therefore he did not feel proper love to him, and confidence in him: secondly, he did not confess his sin, and endeavour to be truly penitent and humbled on account of it: and, thirdly, he did not consider that he was a great sinner, and utterly undeserving the least mercy; that it is for the sake of Jesus Christ alone, who is infinitely worthy, that our prayers can be acceptable to God, and therefore we must

implore every blessing in his name, and believe that through him we shall receive pardon and grace; and never, my dear, forget to pray for the Holy Spirit to come into your heart, and make you better, and then all your thoughts, words, and actions, will be better too.'

"A silence of a few minutes ensued, during which Alfred was evidently very unhappy in his mind: at length, bursting into tears, and throwing his arms around me, he exclaimed, 'Will this good God let me approach him *now*, after I have had such a wicked thought that I would never pray again?'

"'O, my beloved child, he is indeed more ready to hear than you can be to pray, nor will he fail to answer, if you go in humble sincerity, imploring mercy for the sake of his dear Son—that Lover of little children such as you. He will give you grace, and train you up for glory.'

"We were both overcome; Alfred retired, to follow the advice given him, while my earnest prayer ascended to the great Shepherd of Israel for the Lamb of the flock.

"During the day I watched him with uncommon interest, and observed a peculiar sweetness in the whole of his deportment, which, to me, was very touching, although I was then a stranger to what had passed in his mind; for an op-

portunity of speaking with him privately did not occur until evening, when he followed me to the harbour, and, without waiting for an invitation, threw himself into my arms, exclaiming, ‘O, how I love you!’ I replied, ‘My dear, I believe that; but what makes you express your affection so particularly *now*?’

“‘You have taught me,’ said he, ‘what I never knew before, and I will now tell you all about it.’

“‘Do, my love.’

“After a moment’s hesitation, he proceeded:—

“‘After you had talked with me this morning I went into my room, and knelt down: as soon as I could speak for crying, (for you know I was very unhappy then,) I prayed that God would take away my naughty heart, and give me his Holy Spirit; and not for my sake, but for the sake of Jesus: and then I had such a pleasant feeling; I thought that Jesus loved me, and that he would keep me from sinning so again, and he seemed so good and kind that I could not help loving him; and I loved everybody more than I did before, but especially *you*, for sending me to the Saviour.’

“It is impossible to say how deeply this relation affected me, given, as it was, with the most artless simplicity.”

Next to a habit of devotion, is the habit of being *diligent* and *prompt* in the discharge of every little duty which may devolve upon a child. This lays the foundation for prosperity and usefulness through all succeeding time. All possible pains should be taken to encourage the young heart to emulate the great, the wise, the good, in this particular.

Another blessed habit is that of *doing good*; negative goodness is not enough; there must be a positive, active goodness. To teach and enforce this habit, all the piety, the skill, and perseverance of the most accomplished teacher will be requisite. The thousand ways in which this may be done, cannot here be enumerated; but we may learn them all in the teachings and example of Him who “went about doing good.”

A few suggestions for the benefit of teachers may not be out of place. And, first, a heart right with God is all-important. He who would teach others, should himself be taught of God. An eminent writer* says, “We want more than the professor of religion for our Sabbath-school;—we want *holiness*, that holiness which, in times that try men’s souls, would give up all, and even go to the stake with the song of life upon the tongue;—that holiness which, in these times,

* Rev. John Todd.

can resist the temptations of Mammon, the bewitching allurements of the world,—which are almost as trying to piety as persecution and the stake,—and which can live for God and his glory.

“What, then, do I say to those who are already engaged in teaching the Sabbath-school, but who have no evidence that they have been born of God? Shall they at once leave their seats, their classes, and retire? I reply, No: but I say to such, just as I would say to ministers of the gospel, who should confess that they never felt the power of religion on their own hearts;—shall they leave the pulpit, and cease to preach—because they are blind leaders of the blind? I say to such,—No! brethren, no! You have ordination vows upon you. You have put your hand to the plough; you may not look back;—but you ought not again to go into that pulpit with an unholy heart. You ought this hour to go before God, and with a broken heart and contrite spirit, to confess your sins, ask for pardon, and sin no more. I do not ask you to stop preaching, because you have an unholy heart; but I *do* ask you no longer to be so basely ungrateful as to cherish such a heart. Just so I say to the unconverted teacher in the Sabbath-school: You do wrong,—you profess

to teach the child what you do not understand,—you try to make him love that which you do not love yourself ; you profess, by the art of teaching, to show the child that his soul is the great object of life, when you are indifferent and stupid about your own. This is wrong every way. Would the child pray ? Your example is against him. Would he work out his own salvation with fear and trembling ? Your example shows him that it is not necessary. Would he weep in secret places over his sins, and a hard heart ? He is afraid to tell his feelings to you, knowing that you are a stranger to them.

“Next to a holy heart, the same good habits which we would enjoin on children, are essential qualifications for your usefulness, viz.: you should exhibit a punctuality and promptness in meeting your class ; becoming gravity and seriousness while with them ; and due regard for all the rules and regulations of the school. Habits of every kind ought to be given up which a child should not contract ; and the whole conduct and spirit of the teacher should be such as to win the child to the love and practice of duty.

“Another duty of the teacher is to acquire knowledge, to qualify him to teach others, especially his class. To this end he should read, pray, and watch for it, in every passing event

and every opening providence. Like the bee that sips sweetness from every flower, however poisonous, so should the teacher draw instructive lessons from everything. It was in this manner that the Psalmist learned his songs of praise to God. No one who will thus lay himself out for usefulness, can remain barren or unfruitful in his calling.

“Another duty of great importance to the interests of a Sabbath-school, is that teachers should, in a faithful and becoming manner, visit their scholars at their homes. Many excuse themselves from this duty,—they say they have no time for it. Generally, where there is a will to do it, the necessary time will be found. A superintendent of a Sabbath-school, speaking on this subject, says, ‘One teacher, who is an apprentice, and has to labour till nine o’clock every evening, manages to visit nine scholars a week,—while others, who are not half so much confined, plead that they have no time. Need I say he has a full and interesting class? O that there were more whose hearts were as much in the work! we should no longer hear of empty seats and drooping schools.’”

Another duty of a somewhat different character, is that of working by proxy,—through the library, and the influence of the child—upon its

parents and others. How can a pious labourer for God more judiciously reach the profane, the intemperate, the Sabbath-breaking families of our land, than through a selection of appropriate books, put into the hands of children of such families? Facts might be given, showing that, through this medium, souls have doubtless been saved from the woes of that world “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Not only through the use of books, but through the influence of the child, the devoted teacher may reach and instrumentally save the souls of its parents. An interesting incident of this kind, probably familiar to some of our readers,—who, it is hoped, will excuse its appearance in these pages, as it will not be uninteresting and unprofitable to others,—is as follows:—

“Some years since a superintendent was walking out, at the edge of evening, in one of the pleasant villages of Massachusetts. By some providence, he turned out of his accustomed walk, and was accosted by a child, who inquired if he were not a Sabbath-school teacher. On being told that he was, she sighed, and said that she had long been wishing to go to the school, but that her parents forbade her. On being asked the reason of their objections, she wept profusely, and said that her father was in-

temperate, and her mother so wicked, that when she asked to go to the Sabbath-school, they would chastise her for it, and make her work all the Sabbath.

“‘O! if my parents were willing, how glad I should be!’

“‘Will you direct me, my child, to your home? I will have some conversation with your parents respecting your coming to the school.’

“‘O, yes; and will thank you too.’

“On entering this dwelling, I breathed forth a prayer to God that my visit to this family might be long remembered by me, and by them. The child introduced me as one of the Sabbath-school teachers, who wished to have some conversation with her father on the subject of his permitting her to attend the school.

“‘You wretch!’ he exclaimed to his child, ‘have I not forbid your going to such places?’

“He then called for the rod to chastise her. I felt that I was in a delicate position, and at first stood amazed at such unnatural cruelty. I remarked that I hoped he would not punish the child, particularly as on this occasion I had been the cause of exciting his anger.

“‘Your little daughter is kind, sir, and obedient, is she not?’

“‘Yes. But who are you?’

“‘I am your friend, and wish to have a little conversation with you, if you please.’

“‘Well, talk on.’

“‘I hope you will not correct your child on account of my calling to see you, as I was pleased, on meeting her, with the simplicity of her conversation, and thought I should be pleased to see her father.’”

“‘Sir, I will take your advice ; Jane, you will attend to your evening’s business.’

“After conversing with this man for nearly two hours on the subject of Sabbath-schools, and the propriety of his sending Jane, he partially promised that she might go. ‘What say you, *mother*, to our Jane’s going to the Sunday-school?’ The mother refused with an oath ! My heart began to despair, for I thought I had succeeded, and was now disappointed from a quarter which I did not expect. I continued my entreaties for a short time to no purpose, and promised that I would call again.

“On the day following I called again, and, after three hours of painful and laborious conversation, gained consent of these parents that Jane might come to our Sabbath-school.

“The next Sabbath, with gratitude to God, I had the pleasure of introducing Jane into the Sabbath-school. After supplying her with books,

I placed her under the care of Miss D—, one of the most faithful teachers in our school. Jane had not been long with us, before it was plain that she had serious thoughts and feelings ; and, in a few Sabbaths after, her countenance indicated that a change, too pleasing and too visible to be concealed, had taken place.

“ At the close of the school one Sabbath, Miss D. requested me to remain, that I might have some particular conversation with Jane. We tarried after the school was closed, and I turned to the little girl, who said,—‘ O, Mr. —, you are one of the kindest of friends in this world : you have, by bringing me into this school, taught me how to worship God. Before I came here I used to feel bad, but could not help it. Miss D. has told me that sin is the cause of all our bad feelings,—that we are all sinners in the sight of God. I have also learned in this school that we must pray to God that he would forgive us our sins. O, sir, a few Sabbaths since I felt that there was no peace to my poor soul, and saw that if I should then die, I must go to hell with the wicked. On leaving the school, I resolved to pray to God that he would give me a heart to love and serve him ; a heart to fear and obey my parents ; a heart to love *everybody*. And you cannot know what a weight my sins were to me ;

I could get no sleep on account of my sins. But I have longed for the last few days to see you. I have had such new feelings,—my load is removed,—I could hardly wait for the Sabbath to come, that I might tell you what a Saviour I have found. I trust I have given myself entirely to God. I feel that there is something in my heart which I cannot express. O how thankful to God I am for your care and attention,—for the instructions of Miss D—, for ever coming to the Sabbath-school;—for here I have found the Saviour who loves me. Pray for my father, mother, brothers, and sisters; I have prayed for them,—I will continue to pray for them.’”

“This account, which I have related in her own language as nearly as possible, was almost too much for me. She was then only thirteen years of age. She was not only happy herself now in the enjoyment of religion, but it was her heart’s desire that all her father’s family might enjoy the same religion. While she did not forget to pray for them, she often introduced topics in conversation, to interest them in religion.

“From continued dissipation, the father induced a disease which brought him near the gates of death. One morning, on Jane’s visiting him, while very weak and low, he asked her if she thought he would get well? She replied with

tears, that she hoped he would,—‘but if it is God’s will, *dear father*, that you should soon die, where will your soul be when you enter upon eternity?’ He gazed at her in silence; she then asked if he wished to have the good Sabbath-school teacher call to see him?—‘he will pray for and with you.’ He then said, ‘O! my child, will *you* pray for me? and do you think God would hear prayer for such a wicked man as I am?’ The weeping child knelt by the bed-side of her sick father, and breathed out her soul to God in prayer, that he would pardon her father’s sins, and prepare him for the events of the future. The unkind father was melted into contrition, on hearing such importunity to God, to bestow blessings from the throne of his grace upon such a sinner as he had been. The old man now prayed,—felt the efficacy of prayer,—felt that he was a sinner against God,—yes, the aged sinner prayed; and the prayer of the penitent was heard. Under God, Jane was the instrument of her father’s conversion. God, in mercy, restored him to health—*a new man*,—an humble Christian. On his recovery, he was soon seen in the Sabbath-school which he had so long opposed, where he then confessed, before teachers and scholars, how much he then felt on account of his past conduct to the school. He asked the forgive-

ness of all. He is now in the fifty-eighth year of his age, an active teacher in the Sabbath-school. The mother soon became serious; the brothers and one sister were also anxious for the salvation of their souls, and to make their peace with God. In a few months from the time that Jane entered our school, she came forward with her father, mother, four brothers, and a sister, who all joined the Church of God! Thus she was instrumental, in one short summer, in the conversion of seven immortal souls, and all of her own family. Where formerly oaths were daily heard, now morning and evening prayer is offered, and the blessing of God supplicated to rest upon Sabbath-schools, to which, through the goodness of God, eight undying souls ascribe their conversion."

Dear reader, are you a Sabbath-school teacher? O, then, be encouraged to "give all diligence" to make sure the salvation of every soul committed to your charge, and within the reach of your influence! Be not discouraged, but persevere in your labour of love, knowing that God has said, "In due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not." But if you are not connected with this nursery of God,—this hope of the Church,—this pillar of public morals,—this bulwark of civil government,—reflect a moment,

and ask yourself whether, in the final judgment, you can offer a satisfactory reason for your neglect. Were the interest felt and manifested in this benevolent enterprise commensurate with its importance, it is believed very few Christians would need urging to engage personally and heartily in it.

A few years since, the chaplain of the state-prison at Sing-Sing, New-York, made the following statement: "I have lately made pretty thorough inquiry among the convicts here, for the purpose of learning who, and how many, have ever enjoyed the advantages of a Sabbath-school. The result is, that, out of more than *five hundred* convicts, not *one* has been found who has ever been, for any considerable time, a regular member of a Sabbath-school; and not more than two or three who have ever attended such a school at all." A statement like this demands universal attention. What is here said of the convicts at Sing-Sing prison, will doubtless prove true of all other similar institutions. Were it not for extending this chapter beyond proper limits, we might present the reader with many startling facts on this subject; but we forbear, earnestly praying that every man, woman, and child, may come up to the help of the Lord in the support of Sabbath schools.

CHAPTER V.

MINISTERS' DEPARTMENT—THEIR DUTY OUT OF THE PULPIT.

WE would not be understood in this chapter to be aspiring to things beyond our measure; but, from a deep impression of the dignity and awful responsibility of the ministerial office, are constrained to address a few words more to them that "bear the vessels of the Lord."

We would say to such, with all deference to their better education, to their high and holy calling as ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ, that no habit can be more becoming you, and more profitable to your charge, than that of personally labouring for the soul of every individual within the reach of your influence.

The parable of Nathan the prophet to Israel's fallen king was not fully understood, or did not come home to his heart and conscience, till the prophet, in a personal and pointed manner, made an application of it, by telling him, "*Thou art the man.*" Thus professors of religion, and non-professors, listen to the public preaching of the gospel of Christ, and hardly feel, "I am the man to whom this truth is applicable."

But when a minister comes to an individual, as Nathan came to David, the person so addressed will feel, "I am the man," or, "I am the woman," intended.

The minister, however popular and talented he may be as a preacher, will soon become, like Samson, shorn of his strength, if he neglect this mode of labour. To "teach and to preach Jesus," "from house to house," "warning every one night and day with tears," gives efficiency to the preached word. In this way Paul laboured, not for a day, a week, a month,—but for years. In so labouring he was enabled to call the people to record that he was "pure from the blood of all men. For," said he, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." It is feared very few ministers can call on their people at the present day in such strong and confident language respecting their faithfulness to the souls of men. Why is it? Are not souls equally precious now as in the days of Paul? Are they not in as imminent danger of perishing eternally? And is not God the same yesterday, to-day, and forever? Is not the gospel,—its conditions of salvation,—the same? "Why, then, is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" Surely much of the fault lies in the watchmen. They

are not fully awake to the interests of Zion, the value of souls, the awful torments which await the finally impenitent, and the unutterable agonies of the Saviour in the garden and on the cross for their salvation. Were they so awake they would, like Paul, warn every one with tears, and would cry out in bitterness of soul, with the prophet, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

If a realizing sense of eternal truths were felt by ministers now as it was felt by the prophets, by the Saviour and his apostles, and by a host of others in the early history of the Church, we should see the same marvellous displays of Almighty power which then attended the words and labours of God's ambassadors. But we shall never see this again until ministers give full proof of their ministry in every department of their calling. The Church and the world still expect this; it is a reasonable and Scriptural expectation, and one which ought not to be disappointed. Hence if ministers are true to the spirit of their high commission, if they practically consider the example of the apostles and evangelists,—if they keep themselves pure from the blood of souls,—if

they follow the example of Christ,—they must, they *will* be faithful in their personal efforts for the souls of individuals. Ministers should accustom themselves to this holy, this responsible work. It will then sit easily and gracefully upon them, like a well-fitted garment. Many, we trust otherwise good-meaning ministers, have counteracted their pulpit ministrations by their neglect of this duty, and by their trifling, worldly conversation and conduct. It is next to impossible to do the good, and to avoid the evil, without being holy at heart; for “out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.” Thus it is in regard to all the habits of life; they are an index to the state of the heart. “Holiness to the Lord,” should be the motto indelibly engraved on every faculty of the soul. We believe this an essential pre-requisite to a habit of successful personal effort, as well as to successful pulpit labour.

Perhaps it will not be amiss to give in this place a few sketches of ministerial usefulness when out of the pulpit. The first relates to a minister who took the pastoral charge of a church where there were existing difficulties of a personal character among the members. He saw, conversed, and prayed with and for these disaffected members alone; counselled

them separately, and arranged matters for a settlement of these unpleasant affairs, without bringing it before the public, or even the church. Thus they were prevailed upon to meet each other half way, or at the point the pastor designated, as the case seemed to require. In this way many unhappy differences were harmonized and settled, through his personal, confiding, and affectionate dealing with opposing and offending brethren.

Another minister visited many families and individuals, some of whom were poor and dissipated, and who did not attend the public worship of God on the Sabbath. By this means many were induced to attend; were awakened and converted, and now bid fair to enter that eternal rest prepared for the people of God. O how many families, especially of the poor, that know not the comforts of religion, are passed by, as was the man who fell among thieves, by the priest and Levite, because, as it has been remarked, "they do not attend our Church."

Is it not the duty of every minister to go out after perishing souls, even into the "highways and hedges, and compel them to come in to the gospel feast?" The fact that they do not attend "our Church," is a poor excuse for passing by any poor families, to whom reasonable access

can be had. It is not beneath the calling or dignity of any minister, to devote a large share of his time, influence, and prayers, to the special benefit of the poor. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor," says the word of inspiration. The Saviour's example, in this respect, is worthy the special consideration and imitation of every minister. Behold him in noticing and commending the poor widow and her two mites ! Consider his directions also to his disciples, to go and tell John what they saw of his works ; how "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and *the poor* have the gospel preached to them."

Not only should the poor be particularly the pastor's care, but also the young. "Whence does the shepherd look for his future flock, but from among the lambs ? And who are to constitute our future congregations and churches, but our young people ?" It would indeed be well were more labour bestowed upon children and youth by ministers. The Saviour manifested a marked attention to their welfare, and very frequently called upon the multitude, and also upon individuals, not to despise or neglect them. And to Peter, in his last solemn charge, said, "Feed my lambs." This charge is still binding on every

gospel minister;—in the family—in the Sabbath-school—in the congregation—in highways and byways, this command should and ought to be obeyed. O that it could sound with trumpet-voice throughout the land, and reach the ear and heart of every minister, “FEED MY LAMBS!” No part of ministerial labour yields a quicker, a surer, or a larger reward, than that which is bestowed upon the young.

Some ministers have been accustomed, now and then, to prepare sermons expressly for the young, and hardly to notice them at any other time in their pulpit ministrations. May it not be said rather, that no sermon should be preached, where children are present, in which there is nothing particularly applicable to the child? No wonder children are restless in church, and hate to go where they hear nothing adapted to their capacities. The writer well remembers when she first began to attend public service, that nothing but the singing interested her; everything else was inapplicable to her capacity. This is doubtless the case with many children. The importance of beginning early to warn children of the awful consequences of sin, and to direct them to the Saviour, we fear is not sufficiently considered. God has said, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” How many children and

youth are constantly dying in an unrenewed state! At whose hands will their blood be required? Ministers! ponder this question upon your knees before God; slight not your convictions: but see to it that you are clear in this matter.

We once knew a devoted labourer in his Master's vineyard, who has now gone to his reward, that used to invite serious young men to meet him in his study, and there would wrestle with God in their behalf till they were blest. After they were converted, he would urge and lead them on to a greater knowledge and experience of the deep things of holiness, and also press upon their attention their personal obligations to labour and pray for the salvation of others. This was the manner of the devoted J. B. Taylor, with those young disciples who embraced Christ through his instrumentality. He gave them no rest while possessed of a fluctuating hope; but entreated, urged, and pressed upon them the duty and privilege of being *filled with the fulness* of divine love; having their hearts *assured* before God, and everything contrary to *holiness* extirpated. He not only presented these things to others as a theory, but embraced, professed, and carried out in his own life these holy principles. He deeply felt for

the holiness and usefulness of ministers. On one occasion he says, "Looking at the watchmen on Zion's walls, my heart bled for Zion. My heart broke with desire, for the bringing in of a more *devoted* ministry!"

Again, to a brother in college, he says, "Brother F., how do you live in college? I do not hear from you. Are you getting much knowledge *upon your knees*?" This sweet, heart-searching question is worthy the consideration, not only of students for the ministry, but of every pastor, yea, of every individual Christian.

We were formerly acquainted with a minister who now rests from his labours, who was in the *habit of studying his sermons, and all his various duties*, so far as strength and circumstances would permit, *upon his knees*. He was, like the devoted Taylor, eminent for his personal holiness, and personal efforts for the welfare of souls. When he met an individual, and there was suitable opportunity, he ascertained at once, by inquiry, as far as possible, the spiritual condition of the soul, and ceased not to point his hearer to a present Saviour, as ready and willing to impart salvation in all its freeness and fulness to such as heartily submitted and believed on him. Religion, with him, was not borne like a burden; it flowed spontaneously with all his life

and energy of soul. It seemed to be the unceasing purpose of his life to make every person with whom he came in contact more holy and more useful. Every word, look, and action, seemed directed at the heart, and seemed, in most instances, to be felt. This is what the Church and world need to rouse their dormant energies, and to bring forth from among the rubbish of carnal minds those vital truths which will electrify the soul, and bring to life the dead.

An eminent writer,* in speaking to ministers, says, "Think not that all your work is in your studies and pulpits. You are shepherds, and must know every sheep."

The writer believes there are very few unconverted men, who sit from Sabbath to Sabbath under an evangelical ministry, who cannot be roused, by faithful personal appeals to their hearts and consciences, by the holy and consistent pastor. If any Christian minister doubts this, we apprehend he has not fully tried the experiment, or is lacking in some important feature of the Christian character. We do not say all such persons will be converted; but we do say, they cannot help thinking and feeling more deeply on the subject of their personal salvation,

and many of them will be converted when thus dealt with.

A great deal depends on getting such persons to commit themselves in some way to the performance of religious duty. When an individual is under no special awakening, he will not be likely to take any step voluntarily towards securing an interest in the Saviour; but a little direct private effort on the part of the pastor might be successful in his behalf. Perhaps it would be well to elicit a promise from such persons to attend some select prayer, class, or other religious meeting; or to read a chapter in the Bible once, twice, or thrice a day; or to pray as often in secret; or to do some other duty hitherto neglected, which will be the least repulsive to their feelings; and thus, by a close attention, pressing one duty after another upon them, they may soon be brought to yield the citadel of the heart to a conquering Saviour. Many private Christians have not the skill for such an intricate work as this, but it is presumed every pastor has. By such a course many valuable members might be added to the Church, and become useful in sustaining the institutions of religion.

Another item of great importance, for which we beg the prayerful consideration of Christian

pastors, is the duty of training Christians, especially young converts, to the work of personal effort for the conversion of souls ; and also to the generous support of every benevolent object of the Church. Not giving earnest, faithful, and practical instruction on these points, many pastors have injured themselves and their people ; and, it is feared, have been instrumental in the eternal ruin of precious immortal souls.

But let a church be trained, and become devotedly allied to the principles herein advocated, and it will be like "a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid ;" or, "a light shining in a dark place." It will be very easy and pleasant for the minister of Christ to labour with such a people. His efforts will be seconded, his influence sustained, his heart cheered and encouraged, and the work of the Lord will prosper gloriously. Meetings for prayer, and other religious purposes, will not then be thinly attended, cold, nor formal. Perhaps the absence of a single member, under such happy circumstances, would be as quickly noticed as was the absence of any of their number, when the primitive disciples assembled, and Thomas "was not with them."

A minister who has been somewhat interested in the topic before us, gives the following glowing testimony to his confidence in the efficacy and

utility of this important duty:—"I deem it," says he, "of the highest importance in the circle of Christian duties. I feel that, with fifty genuine personal-effort Christians, I could convert any town in the world, almost every soul of it." This may seem to some a wild and strange assertion; but it is, doubtless, in a sense true. If God can take a worm to thresh a mountain,—and through one chase a thousand, and by two put ten thousand to flight, why not with fifty convert a town? God once promised to spare a great and wicked city from destruction for the sake of *ten* righteous, if so many could be found in it. Then why not believe he would convert a city through the faithful instrumentality of fifty righteous? God looks more at the character than the numbers through whom he exerts his saving power. Ministers of the gospel are called, qualified, and blessed with more than ordinary advantages for the work of saving souls from death. God maketh "his ministers a flaming fire," says the Psalmist. What a beautiful figure; denoting light, heat, and power! Every minister who would be a workman in his calling should aspire after this. Their life is, or should be, especially one of union and communion with spiritual things. Unless this is the case, they are poorly qualified to feed the Church of Christ, and

build it up in its most holy faith. "No light," said a dear minister to the writer, not long since, "is like the light of experience." There are spiritual truths,—deep things of God,—which the experienced minister can alone comprehend and bring forth. Hence the importance of Christian pastors being men of deep experience, and much given to prayer. It is said of that great and good divine, Rev. John Mason, who died in 1694, that he observed the duty of prayer six times every day as long as he was able; twice by himself, twice with his wife, and twice with his family. The first posture he was in every morning, as soon as he was out of bed, was upon his knees; and the same as soon as he returned from a journey. Add to this the frequent occasions in which, as a pastor, he was engaged in this duty, and we have an example which few have given, and which many might profitably imitate.

Dear reader, are you a minister of Christ? Permit me to suggest a few questions for your consideration:—

First. Have you consecrated the *entire* powers of body, soul, and spirit, with all that relates to you or concerns you, to God and his service? "If I regard iniquity in my heart," says the Psalmist, "the Lord will not hear me." God

does not approve any one, much less his ministers, in keeping back a part of the price,—He requires a “whole burnt-offering.”

Again. Are you *doing all* in your power to save souls, and build them up in the faith of the gospel? In all your intercourse with your dying fellow-men, are you fixed in your purpose to make and leave impressions for God? Can you say, with the Apostle, “I am pure from the blood of all men?” Can you say you do not “confer with flesh and blood” in preaching Jesus Christ? Do you “make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof?”

Once more. Is faith in the great atonement your constant strong-hold? “Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin;” “the just shall live by faith.” Here is the grand secret of a minister’s strength and success,—

“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone.”

The apostle says, “Now faith is the *substance* of things hoped for; the *evidence* of things not seen.”

In one of the numbers of the British Quarterly Review we find the following sentiment: “No ministry will be really effective, whatever may be its intelligence, which is not a ministry of strong faith, true spirituality, and deep earnestness.”

Rev. J. A. James, in commenting upon this sentiment, says, "I wish this golden sentence could be inscribed, in characters of light, over every professor's chair, over every student's desk, and over every preacher's pulpit."

We might say much more on this subject, but it seems needless when we consider the multiplicity of helps, from more competent pens, which God's ambassadors may find elsewhere, especially in the Holy Scriptures. May this be the man of your counsel, and the basis of all your principles, hopes, and labours.

"Let Zion's watchmen all awake,
And take the' alarm they give;
Now let them from the mouth of God
Their awful charge receive.

"'Tis not a cause of small import,
The pastor's care demands;
But what might fill an angel's heart,
And fill'd a Saviour's hands.

"May they in Jesus, whom they preach,
Their own Redeemer see;
And watch thou daily o'er their souls,
That they may watch for thee."

CHAPTER VI.

DUTY OF EMPLOYERS.

THE Divine commandments are so explicit that they meet all cases and circumstances. In the following chapter we design to consider the precept,—“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”

The good Richard Baxter says,—“Men of wealth and authority, and that have many dependents, have excellent advantages for this duty, (that of labouring for the good of souls.) O what a world of good might lords and gentlemen do, if they had but hearts to improve their influence over others! Have you not all your honour and riches from God? Doth not Christ say, ‘Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required?’ If you speak to your dependents for God and their souls, you may be regarded, even when a minister shall be despised. As you value the honour of God, your own comfort, and the salvation of souls, improve your influence over your tenants and neighbours; visit their houses; see whether they worship God in their families; and take all opportunities to press them to their duty. Despise them not. Re-

member, God is no respecter of persons. Let men see that you excel others in piety, compassion, and diligence in God's work, as you do in the riches and honours of the world. I confess you will by this means be singular, but then you will be singular in glory ; for few of the 'mighty and noble are called.' "

A letter written by Mr. Williams, of Kidderminster, dated Dec. 12, 1747, to a young lady who had been a member of his family, exhibits the power and influence which the head of a family and a business-man may exert for God and the welfare of souls. He says to her, "Though I cannot say, 'I have begotten you through the gospel,' yet the share an indulgent Providence allowed me therein, affords me many a delightful reflection. How transporting is the hope I have, that no less than seven young souls under my roof have been born, in a spiritual sense, within the space of two or three years ! It is the life of my life. I have indeed growing hopes that *every child of mine is a child of God, and every domestic servant of mine is a servant of Christ*, besides *two others* who were only sojourners with me ; and I do and will rejoice therein. It is more to me than all that outward prosperity with which it hath pleased my bountiful Lord to bless me."

The following extract from Rev. J. A. James's "Church in Earnest," is worthy of the special attention of those persons for whom this chapter is particularly designed. He says—"Perhaps it will be found, upon examination, that those do least in the way of personal effort who have the ability to do most. I mean the talented, the wealthy, and the manufacturer who has a large number of persons in his employ, and who might be supposed to have a great influence over them. It happens that, with the exception of pious *females* of the upper classes,* *persons* of talent and business are most rarely found engaged in personal effort for the salvation of their neighbours; they will give their money, and perhaps will also give their time, to the business of committees; and this so far is well, for many will not do this; but how seldom are they found engaged in personal effort for the conversion and salvation of others! Yet what might they not do in this way if they tried! Their station and talents would give them advantages for this sublime occupation which others do not possess. Conceive of the effect which might be expected

* We think this exception is necessary. Truly pious females in the upper classes are not unfrequently ministering angels to the poor. And it may generally be attributed mainly to their influence that licentiousness and infidelity do not revel without restraint where wealth abounds.

to result, if all the wealthy and intelligent members of our churches would give only one hour a week to the labour of diffusing religion, by endeavouring to influence the minds of others, and win their attention to the great concerns of religion.

“This applies with special force to master-manufacturers, and others who have a large number of men in their employ, and under their influence. One gentleman is known to us who has several hundred men in his service, and who takes a deep interest in the spiritual welfare of his workmen. He has a Bible-class for all who are willing to attend. He holds a prayer-meeting with them every week; distributes religious tracts; gives them counsel and admonition; encourages their attendance upon public worship, without at all exerting any sectarian influence; and is about to establish, for their benefit, a library and reading-room. He is a catholic-spirited Churchman, but never suffers his predilections for the Church of England to influence him in his endeavours for the spiritual welfare of the objects of his solicitude. What might not be expected to our population if all our manufacturers and large retail shop-keepers felt the same pious solicitude for the souls of their work-people and shop-men as does this

devoted and eminent servant of our Lord! How this would counteract the infidelity and immorality which so extensively prevail among our labouring population, and which, with such busy assiduity, are cherished by a corrupt press, and by those emissaries of Satan, the teachers of skepticism, profanity, and licentiousness! Surely it becomes Christian masters to ask whether they cannot do something to arrest the progress of this dreadful mischief. But, alas! too many of the men of trade, and even of Christian masters, are either so little concerned about their workmen as to care for nothing but just what measure of profit they can get from their labour, or else they are on such bad terms with them, as to render nugatory any effort they might make for their spiritual welfare."

The fact that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called," is doubtless owing to the blinding influence which worldly wisdom, power, and wealth, exert upon the human mind. While a man feels he is "rich and increased in goods, and has need of nothing," he will never come to Jesus. This gives emphasis to the divine saying, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" All who do

enter this kingdom, or expect to enter it, must become poor in spirit; they must feel that they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" then will they receive the "gold tried in the fire,"—the riches of grace, the salvation of God. The entrance to this kingdom is through the strait gate of repentance and regeneration, the narrow, self-denying way of the cross. But it is no degradation for any man thus to enter; as all will realize, who properly consider the economy of grace.

As all men are placed on the same footing as to personal salvation, so all are required to labour for the welfare of others, according to their "several ability." Jesus never excused men of wealth, of business, or of learning, from being servants in their calling. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." The Saviour took upon "himself the form of a servant;" he "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." This is the standard for Christian masters, and all in authority, to imitate. It is a false notion that labour is degrading to the wealthy and learned. The most noble specimens of Scripture worthies were labourers, in the fullest sense of the word. Kings and judges, priests and prophets, are all included,

not excepting Jesus himself, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords. How derogatory, then, to the character of men of wealth, of education, of influence, is it to live in idleness, or to revel in sensuality and sin! These are they who lead off the poorer classes into foolish and sinful extravagances and into fashionable vices. Complain not, ye who are thus abusing your powers for usefulness, at the dishonesty and unfaithfulness of your clerks, your journeymen, your labourers. You are only receiving the fruits of your own folly. "He who would have friends, must show himself friendly," in the relations here considered, as well as elsewhere.

The spirit which we would recommend to our readers, is beautifully evinced in the following anecdote:—"Lewis the Ninth of France was found instructing a poor kitchen boy; and being asked why he would do so, answered, The meanest has a soul as precious as my own, and bought with the same blood of Christ." God is no respecter of persons, and man should not be. One of the most interesting examples for men of business which we have met with in New-England, is that of Mr. Normand Smith. He was born in Hartford, Connecticut, Nov. 11, 1800, and died Oct. 25, 1833. We gather

our statements respecting him from his memoir, by Rev. Dr. Hawes :—

“At the age of twelve he gave good evidence of piety ; at twenty he settled in life, and found in his companion one who was to be the helper of his spiritual course till death, and who now survives to train up for God three fatherless daughters.” It is said that “he suffered, as many do in the beginning of their Christian course, in consequence of not being more active in the service of God.” This statement will doubtless hold good in every case. No Christian can grow in grace who is not active. Hence the importance of contracting a habit of faithful personal effort in the first stages of our Christian experience : “Do good, thereby good shall come unto thee,” is an inspired axiom.

After Mr. Smith entered on a course of active effort for the welfare of others, he gave good evidence of deep, heart-felt piety, and from that time his life was a useful one. “The language of his heart was, ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ His heart and hand were open to give liberally of his substance unto the Lord. He sought out objects of charity, and studied to discover opportunities to do good.”

Before entering more fully upon his character, as a master and employer of others, we would

notice some of his ways of doing good. Though deeply engaged in business, it did not prevent his engaging personally in all the leading objects of Christian benevolence. "He felt a lively interest in Sabbath-schools. One season he engaged with some others in establishing a Sabbath-school to teach adult foreigners to read. Another season he walked from two to three miles on Sabbath mornings to sustain a Sabbath-school in a destitute district. He often visited the poor-house to converse with and instruct its inmates. He took a deep interest in the coloured people in the city. At one time, when there was more than usual religious attention among them, and they needed more labour than he could perform, he employed a Christian brother for several weeks to visit them from house to house. At another time he paid the board of a young man for one season to keep school for them. He was also among the first and most liberal in maintaining a city missionary to labour in the destitute parts of the city, and to preach to the seamen."

Such were the ardent desires of Mr. Smith to do good, that at one time he thought of relinquishing his worldly business, in part at least, that he might have more time for religious purposes. He finally decided to continue in busi-

ness as before, though in a more benevolent sense. He says, "I believe the Lord has led me, and inclined me to pursue my business, not to increase in riches, but that I may have to give to him that needeth. It is therefore my purpose to engage in my business that I may serve God in it, and with the expectation of getting to give." How worthy of imitation is such an example! This is the heaven-inspired principle on which every Christian man should act.

"In personal and domestic expenditure he studied Christian economy. While he denied himself no reasonable comfort, it was his habit to consider what things he might dispense with, that he might have the more to give for charitable purposes. Modest and unassuming in his natural character, he thought it *not consistent* with the simplicity of the gospel for one professing godliness to follow the customs and fashions of the world." Will the reader, whatever may be his circumstances or calling in life, consider this feature of Christian consistency in Mr. Smith. Perhaps there is no greater evil among professing Christians than that of following the customs and fashions of the world. God has given a most definite command on this point:—"Be not conformed to this world, but be

ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Again: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance!" And again: "Forasmuch, then, as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time to the lust of men, but to the will of God." These holy and inspired injunctions, the Spirit of God writes on all truly pious hearts. And all who do not in life conform to this requirement, have just ground to fear in reference to their spiritual and eternal safety.

But to return to our narrative: it is said that "nowhere, perhaps, did he shine brighter than in his family. He felt deeply his responsibility in relation to all the members of his household, and, by a kind and faithful discharge of his duties, aimed to bring them all to a saving knowledge of Christ. Family worship he esteemed a most sacred duty and privilege, and was particularly interesting in his manner of performing it; requiring all the family to be present, and engaging each one to unite in the reading and singing, which usually made a part

of his morning and evening worship. A few weeks previous to his death a friend called to see him who had just been married, and who was not pious. With great affection and faithfulness he urged him to become a Christian, and establish family worship; remarking, that he had enjoyed more in his family religion than in all other things put together."

Having thus briefly glanced at the foregoing traits in Mr. Smith's character, we shall now notice him in connexion with his business:—
"As a master, he was exceedingly attentive to the morals and habits of those who were committed to his care, and laboured most assiduously for their salvation. He was in the practice of boarding his younger apprentices in his own family, and at his own table, chiefly that he might thus the more faithfully watch over and promote their spiritual interests. He used to say, if they were not converted soon after coming into his family, he had little hope of them. As his family increased, he was urged to board them out. But he would reply, 'I must form their characters myself; I cannot part with them till they are Christians;' and when they had professed faith in Christ, he would say, 'I wish to keep them, to instruct and assist them in the Christian life.' When, by the coming of

others into the family, he was obliged to part with the elder ones, he was very particular in regard to their boarding-places, seeking to place them in Christian families; and was unwilling that more than two should room together, knowing that young Christians are often tempted to neglect secret prayer for the want of a suitable place for retirement.

“The means which he used to impress the minds of those who from time to time came into his family, were various. Sometimes he would converse with them separately; at others he would address them together; but depended, most of all, upon the presentation of truth in family worship, and the daily exhibition of a Christian example, together with a manifest tender concern for their salvation. He has been known to sit up half the night in prayer for a member of his family whose mind he knew was impressed on the subject of religion. On his dying bed, nearly the last words he said to his brother, engaged with him in business, were, ‘*Take good care of the boys.*’ He felt the same benevolent concern for the domestics of the family; and it is an interesting fact, that all who resided in the family in this capacity, during the last four years of his life, hopefully became Christians. One of the number thus con-

verted heard him one morning very early, before the family had risen, earnestly at prayer. She listened, and found it was for herself. Her mind was impressed, and she sought and found the one thing needful.

“He felt his responsibility in relation to all in his employment. This led him at one time to form a Bible-class among the females of his establishment, which met in their work-room on Wednesday afternoons. This exercise was greatly blessed, and resulted in the conversion of many. The number hopefully brought to Christ by his unwearied efforts, among his apprentices, domestics, and others in his employment, is not known. But many, very many, it is believed, will be found at the last day who will owe their salvation, under God, to his faithful labours and prayers. It has been well remembered of him, that it seemed to be his object to leave a *decidedly religious* impression on the mind of every person with whom he had intercourse.”

The writer would pause here, and beg the consideration of the Christian reader to the duty of having a purpose,—a fixed and settled purpose of heart,—to imitate Mr. Smith in this last-mentioned particular. For want of such a purpose little good, comparatively, is done. This

fixed purpose to make impressions for God—for heaven—for eternity,—is what every Christian should possess. The devoted Harlan Page was an eminent example of this character. It is believed that every individual who had intercourse with him during the last few years of his life can attest to his faithfulness in this respect. Were our churches made up of such living epistles, known and read of all men, we should see sinners in multitudes flocking to Christ.

It is further said of Mr. Smith,—“He made it a point, whenever it was practicable, to converse more or less with *all persons* he came in contact with, on the subject of their salvation.”

He very frequently set apart days for fasting and prayer. By this means the Christian obtains his power with God and for God in behalf of others. Perhaps no class of persons have more need of such consecrated seasons than business men. Their daily employment, and the influences by which they are surrounded, will have a strong tendency to draw the mind from God, and to fill it with worldly cares and perplexities. At the close of one of Mr. S—’s, seasons of fasting and prayer, he made this entry in his journal:—

“Resolved, in the strength of God, henceforth to do my *whole* duty both to God and man,—

to adopt the following as the division of my time; namely,—seven hours to sleep,—ten to five o'clock; three hours devoted to the family and study,—five to eight; four hours to business,—eight to twelve; one hour to dinner and devotion,—twelve to one; three hours to business,—one to four; two hours to visiting; four hours to family devotion and meeting;—to leave nothing to be done to-morrow which can be done to-day. I must have something to do every leisure moment. There is a time for everything, and everything should be done in its time. As three principal objects now claim my attention, I will give special attention to them, as follows: Mondays and Tuesdays, city missions; Wednesdays and Thursdays, the church; Fridays and Saturdays, Sunday-school.

“Resolved, to seek to be more useful in my family. I tremble in making these resolutions. May God give me grace to keep them. I now make a renewed consecration of myself and my all.”

Although a Christian may deviate through circumstances, infirmities, and temptations, from such a set of rules for holy living, he cannot be otherwise than useful and happy while steadily aiming at their observance. System and method

are as important in the things of religion as in other things ; when every duty, secular as well as religious, is transacted on such principles, there will be a beautiful harmony and order pervading all the public, social, and private walks of life.

A professor of religion, with whom the writer has some acquaintance, was, for a series of years, in the habit of attending to religious duties when it seemed most convenient. Sometimes the hurry of business would make it appear out of place to devote half an hour in the morning to secret and family devotion ; and at noon company were present, or something else was an objection to the performance of this duty ; again at evening, company or engagements would be permitted to interfere, and it must be deferred till bed-time ; when that time came, the weariness of body and mind was such, that there was no heart or spirit for communion with God and spiritual things. Thus it is with many who profess the religion of Jesus Christ. They are the most servile slaves, —chained to the drudgery of a sinful, perishing world. It was not so with Mr. S. “It was his constant practice to rise before the family, and spend one or two hours by himself before attending family duties. At noon he had a sea-

son of prayer ; and no company would prevent his retiring, as he would excuse himself for a little while, that he might enjoy his accustomed converse with God. He usually attended some meeting in the evening, but always prayed before he went. He had a room expressly set apart for private devotion, and would never be disturbed in his retirement. If any one called, he received no answer ; and he had seasons there, when, as he expressed it, the presence of God seemed to fill the room, and he was almost afraid to step. He had a place for prayer also in his store, and would often invite his brethren, when they came in, to unite with him in prayer."

Fenelon very justly remarks, that "we must reserve the needful hours for communing with God in prayer. Persons who are in considerable offices, have so many indispensable duties to fulfil, that scarcely any time remains to them for communion with God, except they strictly apply themselves to its regulation. It is necessary, then, to be firm in adopting and observing a rule. Our rigour in this may seem excessive ; but without it, all falls into confusion ; we are dissipated and relaxed ; we lose our strength ; we are insensibly at a distance from God."

We might continue this chapter to almost any length, such is the importance which it assumes

to our mind ; but we will close with one more example, and a few reflections. That example is that of the Gentile centurion. This great man,—great in goodness and usefulness,—had a “servant who was dear to him, and he was sick, and ready to die.” His humility was such, that he sent the elders of the Jews to Jesus in behalf of his servant, instead of going himself. We may judge what influence and power he possessed in his being able to procure such a delegation in favour of a mere servant. Nor is this all ; the centurion’s wealth and benevolence are also prominently noticed in the statement—“he hath built us a synagogue.” How worthy of imitation is such an example. How few rich men build places of worship for the poor. And, beyond this, the crowning feature in the centurion’s character is his faith, of which Jesus testified, saying, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” It is needless perhaps to say that his servant was healed.

Ye men of wealth, of business, talent, and influence, let the foregoing examples of what Christian men have been, and of what they have done, encourage you to go and do likewise. Try to realize the solemn fact, that your responsibilities are vast and fearful,—that time, with all its fleeting concerns, will soon have an

end—that you are living for eternity—“treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath,” or “seeking for glory, honour, immortality, eternal life.” Will you not “wisely improve the present hour,” that you may in eternity wear a crown of glory, and rejoice forever with the souls who have been saved by your instrumentality? May God help you to be faithful,—to inscribe “holiness to the Lord” upon all your motives,—upon all you do—upon all you possess—upon all your hopes for time and eternity!

“Master, I own thy lawful claim;
Thine, wholly thine, I long to be;
Thou seest, at last, I willing am,
Where'er thou go'st, to follow thee;
Myself in all things to deny;
Thine, wholly thine, to live and die.

“Pleasure, and wealth, and praise no more
Shall lead my captive soul astray;
My fond pursuits I all give o'er;
Thee, only thee, resolved to obey:
My own in all things to resign,
And know no other will but thine.”

CHAPTER VII.

DUTY OF THE EMPLOYED.

HAVING in the preceding chapter considered the duty of employers, we would next notice that of the employed. He who said, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal," said also, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."

Those whom we now address are a numerous and interesting class of persons; they are possessed of many talents and opportunities for doing good; their influence is great,—greater in some respects than that of any other class of men. We allude particularly to apprentices, clerks, journeymen mechanics, and labourers in general, who are engaged in the various departments of agricultures, manufactures, and commerce.

All men, whatever may be their earthly calling, are equally bound to live for God and the interests of the soul,—all are hastening to the judgment-seat of Christ,—all must give an ac-

count for themselves in that great day,—all must hear the sentence, “Depart, ye cursed!” or, “Come, ye blessed!”—all must then enter upon a state of happiness or misery, to continue forever. In eternity there will be no distinction between the master and the servant, the rich and the poor, the ignorant and the learned, the black and the white, the bond and the free, except that which proceeds from character. He that is holy here, will be holy there; he that is filthy here, will be filthy there. “God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.” But God is a respecter of character. “He discerns between the righteous and the wicked, and between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.” *Character*, therefore, makes the man; not his money, nor his learning, nor his popularity, nor his power. The chief object of life—the end for which man was created,—is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. “The conclusion of the whole matter,” says the word of inspiration, is to “fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man; for God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

That we may thus glorify God, and keep his commandments, the following preliminary steps must be taken :—

First: If it is not already done, decide to be governed by *right principles*; principles founded in Scripture, and in accordance with your own best judgment. He that is without fixed principles of this character, is like a ship at sea without a helm, carried about by the changing current of wind and wave, and in continual danger of being dashed upon the rocks, or stranded on the ocean shore, or ingulfed in the fearful whirlpool.

“You ought,” says Todd, in his “Student’s Manual,” “to act upon principles which conscience will at all times approve. Do you know what it is to sit down to meditate, at the close of the day, and have something hang upon the soul like lead,—to have a cloud between you and the throne of grace? Do you know what it is to lie down at night, and look upon the day, and the days that are passing, and find no bright spot upon which the memory lingers with pleasure? Do you know what it is to lie on your pillow and feel the smittings of conscience, and have the heart ache, while the clock slowly measures off the hours of night? This is because conscience is at her post, calling

the soul to account. She lashes, she heaves up the waves of guilt, till the soul feels like being buried under them. Do you not thus commune with your heart, at times? But if you will live for God,—wholly for God,—conscience will soothe you, comfort you, and bring hope to your soul, even in your darkest hour.” See to it, then, that you act from such principles as an enlightened conscience shall approve.

Second: *Avoid temptations*, and even the appearance of evil. A want of caution and firmness in this particular has proved the ruin of thousands, especially of the class of persons whom we are now addressing. Temptations, snares, and pit-falls, are spread thick through all the path of life, from the cradle to the grave. Every man has his besetting sin; and every circumstance and condition of life, its peculiar trials and temptations. To enumerate them all would be impossible. Some will assume one form and some another; some will come up at one time, and some at another; some will attack us on one point, and some on another. Hence, it is of the utmost importance to be always on our guard. Among the most dangerous ones to which young men are exposed, are irreligious and immoral society; useless and pernicious books and papers; dissipating and sensual amusements; form-

ing hasty schemes of pursuit,—particularly that of getting money ; indolence, and inattention to the interests of employers ; insubordination ; dishonesty, profanity, giving place to anger and other improper feelings, thoughts, words, and acts ; disregard for the Sabbath ; neglect of the Bible, of prayer, and other moral and religious duties. All these, and many others which might be enumerated, should be steadily and firmly avoided. If they are not guarded against and resisted, you will bring upon yourself swift destruction. Yes, young man ! you have only to take off the checks of reason, of Scripture, of conscience, and permit your passions and appetites to control you, and your course is straight to perdition,—you are a lost man. If you would escape the fearful ruin, as a bird from the snare of the fowler, O, be entreated to *resist and avoid temptation !* Look to God for help and strength to do so. Flee ! flee for your life to the stronghold of sovereign grace ; for only there can you escape the wiles that are in the world through lusts.

Third : Not only is it necessary to have good principles, and to avoid temptations, but a *diligent effort to be good* is requisite in order to glorify and enjoy God. Negative and passive goodness is doubtful, and superficial at best. It lacks the peace and life-giving energy of the gospel. It

is like feeding on the husks of which the swine did eat, instead of feasting on the bread of heaven, which God has provided and given for the life of the world.

To be good, we do not wish to be understood to mean in *one* particular, but in *every* particular. Next to good principles, there should be *good habits*,—habits of industry, of sobriety, of early rising, of study, of punctuality, of benevolence, of perseverance, of devotion. We might dwell on the importance of such habits, but the limits of our work will not permit. The writer to whom we have just referred says, “The whole character may be said to be comprehended in the term *habits*.” An extract from his pen on one or two habits may not be unacceptable to the reader, coming as they do from such a source.

“All experienced people will tell you that the habit of using tobacco, in any shape, will soon render you emaciated and consumptive; your nerves shattered, your spirits low and moody; your throat dry, and demanding stimulating drinks; your person filthy, and your habits those of a swine.”

He is speaking of the habit of *doing everything well*. He says, “Anything that is worth doing at all, is worth doing well; a mind well disciplined in other respects is defective, if it have

not this habit. A young man, who unexpectedly lost the affections of a young lady, of whom he was sufficiently fond, informed his friend, with a good degree of shrewdness, that he doubted not that he lost the prize from a very little circumstance. She handed him a letter which she had been writing to a friend, and asked him to direct it. He did so, but in a manner so hurried and slovenly, (for it was his great ambition to be quick in doing anything,) that she blushed when she received it. From that little circumstance her affections seemed to cool, until they were dead to him. His friend comforted him by saying, 'she was more than half right.'

"This incident" is mentioned, not on account of its dignity, but to illustrate the point in hand. Everything should be done *well*, and practice will soon enable you to do it quickly."

Fourth: To stop here would be wrong;—it is not enough: we should go still farther. To glorify and enjoy God, there must be *sincere, constant, and faithful effort to benefit and save others*. To be thus engaged is a sure test of true goodness,—of Christ-like benevolence. It is the only sure path to honourable eminence in this world, and to eternal life in that which is to come.

We might cite your attention to numerous instances in which apprentices, clerks, mechanics,

and other labourers have, by diligence and well-directed effort, risen step by step to great eminence and usefulness. But, whether eminence in this world is gained or not, it is the duty and privilege of every one to be useful,—to make the world better for his being in it. He that instrumentally saves one soul from sin and misery, deserves greater honour than if, like Alexander, he had conquered the world. “If any man serve me,” saith the Saviour, “him will my Father honour.” “Greater honour can no man have, than that which comes from God.” This all may obtain, and retain forever.

As some inducement to labour for the salvation of souls, and thereby honour the Saviour, we present the following brief sketches:—A pious young man, employed in a store, was called on one day by an unconverted friend, who manifested a deep seriousness for the salvation of his soul. The pious youth, having conversed a little with his friend, proposed that he should call again in the evening, and they would have a season of prayer together in the counting-room, after the store was closed. The proposition was acceded to, and while they were upon their bended knees together, the young penitent broke forth in acclamations of joy, saying “O, how I love you!—I love everybody!—I love Jesus!” His

attention had been arrested and his feelings awakened to the subject of religion, from some remarks which were made by the pious young man in a prayer-meeting the evening previous. He is now a faithful and devoted Christian. As he has "freely received," so may God help him to give as freely to others, and finally to finish his course with joy.

Another incident is as follows:—Two clerks, with one of whom the writer has been acquainted for some years, were engaged in the same store. One of them was pious, the other was not. The pious one often spake to the other of the love of Jesus,—of his own experimental knowledge of that love, and urged upon him the importance of obtaining the same invaluable blessing. A few years afterward, when they had for some time been separated from each other, the pious clerk received a letter from the other, stating that he had given his heart to Jesus, and had espoused his cause and service. He also added, that the chief instrumentality of his conversion he attributed to the pious example and faithful conversations of his Christian friend while they were together in the store. They are now both ministers of the gospel.

The following fact is another exhibition of the utility of personal Christian effort for the salva-

tion of souls. The writer has had the statement from both parties, and has also a personal knowledge of some of the incidents connected with it. A young man who was faithfully engaged in carrying out the principle before us, left his native State and took up his residence in Massachusetts. None of the large family with whom he lived were then connected with what is denominated an evangelical Church, although possessed of very good moral character. The pious stranger, whom we shall call G—, found himself far from all those public means of grace which he had been accustomed to enjoy; and it is believed that for some time he had no Christian acquaintance in the place. Notwithstanding his youth, and the discouraging circumstances in which he was placed, he resolutely resolved to maintain his regular seasons for secret prayer and the study of God's holy Word. It may be attributed, perhaps, to this fact, that he did not backslide, as too many do in similar circumstances.

There was another young man, an apprentice, connected with this family, with whom, in the way of business, the pious G. was associated. G. used frequently to converse with his impenitent friend on the subject of personal religion, and finally promised to make him a sub-

ject of daily prayer till he should be converted, if, on his part, he would promise to pray for himself. The unconverted youth assented to the kind proposition of his friend, and for some time strove to be faithful to his engagement ; but not feeling any special interest in the things of religion, he soon relinquished it. The pious and devoted G. still persevered, believing that "in due season he should reap, if he fainted not." A few months passed away, and the unconverted young man, feeling restless and uneasy, wandered away one Sabbath from his usual place of worship, to attend another of a different denomination. No sooner did he hear the text announced than convictions seized his mind, and he trembled under a consciousness of his lost and perishing condition while out of Christ. He thought of his praying friend, and his broken vow. He hastened home, and that evening resolved to be a Christian. In the course of a few days he was rejoicing in a Saviour's love. Years have since passed away, but he seems still resolved to make "his calling and election sure." The pious labourer, through whose instrumentality the feet of this youth were turned into the paths of righteousness, continued about six or eight years longer a burning and shining light ; and then, after a few days' illness, died in the

triumphs of Christian faith. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

We might multiply cases of this description, but deem it unnecessary. We will only add, that for faithfulness to their employers or masters, and also for their faithfulness to God, and to the souls of men, we would refer the reader to the history of Jacob, of Joseph, of Moses, of Daniel, and a host of others who have lived in every age of the world. Where can we find poorer persons, or persons more persecuted and afflicted, more laborious, more useful, and yet more honoured than these men? Their record—their reward is on high.

"Once they were mourners here below,
And pour'd out cries and tears;
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.

"I ask them whence their vict'ry came;
They, with united breath,
Ascribe the conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to his death.

"They mark'd the footsteps that he trod,
His zeal inspired their breast;
And following their incarnate God,
Possess the promised rest."

CHAPTER VIII.

DOMESTIC DEPARTMENT.

INDIVIDUALS in the more humble and obscure walks of life, frequently feel that their influence and labours are of little or no consequence :—a mistaken notion, as we shall endeavour to show in this chapter. It is an old proverb, that what has been done may be done again. If it is not true in everything, yet, doubtless, it is so in matters of this kind : we will therefore offer a few facts, for the encouragement of those to whom this department of our little volume is addressed.

A large family, having occasion to employ a domestic for a few months, procured the services of a pious woman, who was very particular in the observance of her seasons for secret prayer, and other religious duties. At first the younger members of the household made many sneering remarks about her devotional habits, but they were endured with meekness and Christ-like patience. She did not, as some would have done, leave her situation for another of more congenial character. Hers was the first practical commentary on the religion of Jesus which that family ever had. God owned and blessed it to

the spiritual, and, it is believed, the eternal welfare of some of their precious souls. That pious woman now sleeps in Jesus ; and it may be presumed she will have a higher seat in glory than those who ridiculed her consistent Christian conduct.

The following is another pleasing incident of piety in humble life :—“ In a family in the north of Ireland, a pious young woman was engaged as a servant. The poor girl was much ridiculed for her religion by the young ladies, but she did not render evil for evil ; but would allow them to laugh at her, and then mildly reason with them. She made it her study to be attentive and useful to them ; took opportunities to speak to them about religion ; and would read the Sacred Scriptures to them when they went to bed. They commonly fell asleep in a little time under the sound ; but she was not discouraged. Having exemplified Christianity in her life, Providence sent a fever to remove her to a better state. The young ladies were not permitted to see her during her illness ; but they heard of her behaviour, which did not lessen the impression which her previous conduct had made upon them. Soon after, the two elder made a profession of religion ; the little leaven spread ; and now all the *nine* young ladies appear truly pious.

Nor is religion in this highly-favoured family confined to them: other means were employed by God in producing this great change; but one of the two first who became serious, informed me that she chiefly ascribed it to the life and death of the servant-maid."

We are not told what were the other means that God employed in this good work; but probably it was in answer to the prayer of faith offered by this poor girl, that God gave efficiency to the means which so happily resulted in the conversion of those persons. One thing is certain, that the prayer of faith, connected with a holy life, will produce what the most eloquent preaching fails to effect. Infidels have been known to quail beneath such influences, when argument and reasoning have seemed to confirm them in their skepticism. Pious domestics, who may be located in irreligious families, should study to adorn their Christian profession by a well-ordered life and godly conversation, "knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

The following instance of the good influence of one in humble life, is given in the book already quoted from,—*"The Way of Holiness:"*—The writer says, "I called to-day to see

H——, the woman who was so greatly blest while living with us some time since. She has been sick several weeks, and is apparently just on the verge of heaven. On asking her whether she would not rather depart, and be with Christ, she replied, 'If raising my finger would decide the point, I would not dare to do it.'

"Her health had become so infirm that it was necessary she should embrace the first opportunity which offered, of living where she would have but little to attend to. On going there, she found that the family in which she had engaged did not have family prayer, the husband being irreligious. H—— expressed her disappointment, and said she felt as if she could not stay in a family where she should be deprived of this privilege. She then modestly said to the lady, who was a Christian woman, 'If Mrs. —— will pray and read one morning, I will the next.' The lady consented to the proposal. The husband soon began to manifest interest on the subject of religion, and the Lord laid the weight of his soul on H——'s mind in such a manner, that, to use her own language, she reeled as one intoxicated under the weight of her feelings. This intense excitement was more especially felt during one Sabbath. As she was going to church, she was so absorbed in travail of soul

for him that she was forgetful of all around her, or where she was, and being unable to proceed to church, she sat down by the way, and continued, she was not aware how long, in agony of soul for him. That night he went to the inquiry-room, became deeply awakened, and soon afterward became a happy believer in Christ; and in heaven will doubtless remember the humble individual who was instrumental in rearing the family altar."

The writer, having known some of the persons mentioned in the following interesting sketch, can more confidently present it to the readers of this volume, as affording more than ordinary encouragement to be diligent and faithful in the calling which God may, in his providence, have assigned us.

"A number of years ago, when the now venerable Bishop H—— was stationed at Boston, he was surprised one morning by a call at the parsonage of a lady, whose costly dress and elegant manners indicated that she belonged to the highest circle of the polished society of that refined city. He was still more surprised when, after the usual introduction, she made known, with language direct and decided, her wish to unite with the humble society under his charge. She gave him her name, and the highest refer-

ences in the city, for information respecting her, and retired, with an earnest request that he would consider her application till she should be able to have another interview.

“This lady was a near relative of the celebrated John Hancock, whose name stands so prominent on the ‘Declaration of Independence,’ and in the history of his country. At the time of her visit to the Methodist parsonage, she was surrounded with all the resources and gayeties of her high sphere of life; but that blessed Spirit which is given to all men had been striving with her mind, and had made use of an instrumentality to lead her to the church, and to heaven, so remarkable as to deserve notice and commemoration.

“While living in luxury, with no higher notions of religion than those afforded by the fashionable Unitarianism of the day, the providence of God placed in her family a devoted Methodist servant-maid, to whom was afterward added also, in occasional service in the household, a pious coloured woman of the same denomination.

“The religious example and converse of these humble Christians could not escape the observation of the lady of the house,—they were unostentatious ministries, which God had placed

there, and with the exercise of which he honours his lowliest saints, whilst he withholds it from the angels of heaven. Their mistress became interested and thoughtful; she once picked up one of their books,—it was a volume of Wesley's Sermons,—she opened it at the discourse on the 'Witness of the Spirit.' What a mystical phrase! She had never heard it in her own church; but on reading the text it appeared obviously a proper, a Scriptural title. She read the sermon through. It poured a flood of light on her benighted spirit. If this was religion, she had never known it by experience. She read the volume through: it explained to her, for the first time in her life, the true character of personal piety, and led her to the mercy-seat to seek it. Her deep and anxious convictions of sin were revealed to the devoted servants, and these lowly children, while labouring in her kitchen, became her instructors and guides in the way to heaven. She longed to hear a genuine minister of Christ, who preached these new truths; and for several evenings this votary of the fashionable world might have been seen, still arrayed in her gay apparel, following at a short distance, and with a throbbing heart, her coloured servant to the Methodist chapel. There she heard the same truths proclaimed by the

living voice ;—their impression on her conscience was deepened—she sought with all her soul the pardoning mercy of God, and in a few weeks was ‘justified by faith, and had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’

“She had thus far kept her exercises of mind a profound secret, known only to herself and her pious servants ; she felt now that it was her duty, and her only safety, openly to confess Christ, and associate herself with his people. Too precious were the new truths and new sympathies which had possessed her soul, to allow her to seek a fashionable religious communion, where the reproach of the cross might be shunned ; the humble, but devoted people, whose agency had reached her, and led her to the ‘Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,’ were her decided choice ; and she called upon their pastor, as stated, to solicit admission to their lowly fellowship.

“In a few days she visited him again ; he had consulted her references, and ascertained her high family relations and excellent character. No misfortune or eccentricity of mind could account for her decided predilection for the Methodist Church. She had been renewed in spirit, had consecrated herself to God, and, intent only on the salvation of her soul, resolved to

place herself amidst such religious associations as would most effectually enable her to work out her salvation with fear and trembling ; and she justly inferred, that the obscurity and poverty of the Methodist band of that day would but render her connexion with them a more exemplary proof of her love to their Redeemer, and increase her facilities for usefulness. Mr. H—— informed her, that there could be no objection to her reception among them, but assured her of the disparity between her circumstances and habits and those of most of his people. He explained to her also the disciplinary rules on dress.

“ Her reply was, that she had read the Discipline, had counted the cost, and was ready to conform to it. She was afterward publicly received at the altar of the church, attired in that beautiful simplicity which our Discipline and the spirit of our religion require ; and above all, with that spirit of meekness, that beauty of holiness, which forms the loveliness of piety on earth, and of angels in heaven.

“ She was ever after distinguished by eminent piety, and all its graceful fruits. In the church she found, as she had calculated, a useful field for her talents and resources. Her time was devoted to unostentatious charities. Not long after her remarkable change, the decease of her

husband placed her large fortune entirely at her own command. She now consecrated herself to more abundant usefulness,—the poor, the sick, the widow and fatherless, and all the benevolent claims of the Church, were the objects of her sympathy and liberality. Thus rejoicing in hope of the glory of God herself, and dispensing happiness all around, her life became to her a scene of the purest blessedness. Ah! if the rich and the fashionable, who, with satiated tastes and aching hearts, are ever turning from, and again returning to the hollow gaieties of the world, could but discern the serene enjoyment of the heart which throbs only to serve God and bless man, how would the attractions of frivolous pleasure change to disgust!

“For three years after the death of her husband, did this Christian lady thus minister, like an angel of mercy, to the necessities of the sick and poor. At the end of this period her Lord called her to her reward. Peacefully and with holy joy she passed to the society of the good above, with the tears and blessings of those who in humbleness of life, but with true hearts, had loved in her the similitude of their Lord. But if to do is to live, her life did not end with her death. In dying, she provided for its continuance. One who has narrated the interesting

facts of her short, but devoted pilgrimage, says, 'that she appropriated in her will a liberal share of her estate to various benevolent objects.' To the minister who had received her into the church, and to his colleague, she left valuable legacies ; and to the church itself a perpetual fund for the support of its poor.

"For the above facts I am indebted chiefly to the narrative mentioned ; but it was my lot personally to witness another incident, which pertains to the sketch. Many years after the departure of the "elect lady," the providence of God placed me in pastoral charge of ——— church. Though composed of several hundred members, devoted and respectable, I found none more esteemed than an humble coloured woman, called "Mother Suma." Such was the purity of her Christian reputation, sustained through a long pilgrimage, that it was justly appreciated as the common and precious property of the whole church. Tranquil and uniform in her piety ; faithful through many years in every duty enjoined upon her ; singularly useful in her sphere, and exhibiting always those gentle affections so characteristic of the African character, her colour and cast seemed forgotten in a community where they were usually strongly distinguished. She was more than respected—she was beloved.

“Not long after my arrival she died in peace. I officiated at her funeral. On entering her small rooms no one could fail to notice the impress of the good woman’s mind; everything was clean and extremely neat, instinct with that expression of homely comfort, so congenial to the tastes of tranquil and pious old age. Here had been her retired sanctuary, the scene of her daily meditation and prayers, where she daily expected her Lord and his ministering angels: and it seemed, in its whole interior aspect, to have been fitted for their reception. The aged saint lay in her coffin in the midst of it. I was affected to see the interest of all classes to pay her memory the last acts of respect. The rooms were crowded, and throngs stood around the door, unable to enter. The young were there, who had felt themselves instructed by the lessons of her holy life,—the veterans of the church, who had journeyed homeward with her from the beginning of their pilgrimage, wept around her remains—the choir, with their chorister, were there, to sing the adieus of the church to the emancipated spirit that had escaped from its earthly sufferings. And as we spoke of her excellences, and prayed that their memory might be a sweet savour among us, many eyes wept, and many hearts felt how beautiful is a holy life, in even

the lowliest vale of earth, and how serenely pleasant its end, and how hallowed its memory. More genuine regard accompanied that daughter of Ethiopia to the grave than attends the departure of nobles or monarchs.

“The reader will share my interest in this humble saint, when I tell that ‘Mother Suma’ was the coloured servant who had guided the wealthy convert of the Hancock family to the Methodist chapel. As an aged member of the church was relating the fact to me, another stood by, one of its stewards, and remarked, that ‘the providence of God had singularly blessed the zeal of the pious negro to her own advantage; that, during the latter and helpless years of her life, she had been comfortably sustained by aid from the proceeds of the fund left by the very lady whom she had thus led into the path of life. Every month,’ he continued, ‘for a long time have I carried to her humble home the bounty of her deceased friend.’”

How marvellously does the providence of God sometimes use the feeblest means for the noblest ends! Despise not the day of small things, for “the excellency of the power is of God, and not of man.” And remember, that in blessing others we bless ourselves. In this life we often reap a reward; in the next, invariably.

Before closing this chapter we will give one more instance of almost inimitable faith and true courage in one placed in humble circumstances. We allude to the little captive maid of the land of Israel, who waited on Naaman's wife: "Naaman was captain of the host of the king of Syria, and was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria." Naaman was afflicted with that dreadful disease, the leprosy; but, notwithstanding the inveterate nature of this awful malady, the "little maid" believed that God was willing to make his power known not only to Naaman, but to his idolatrous nation, by effecting its cure. She accordingly communicated her thoughts to her mistress, saying, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy; and one went in and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the little maid that is of the land of Israel." Arrangements having been made by the king, Naaman went to see the prophet, and, in obedience to his prescriptions, was healed.

This beautiful and inspired sketch should teach us that, in all circumstances, God can and will be honoured by the faith, piety, and efforts of his lowliest saints. If any class of persons

are more nearly allied to the humanity of Jesus than others, it is the poor,—the more common people; such were the ones who heard him gladly, and whom he chose to be with him in a most peculiar sense while tabernacled in the flesh. Among these were many women, who ministered unto his necessities, and of whom a poet sings:—

“Not she with traitorous lips her Saviour stung;
Not she denied him with unholy tongue;
She, when apostles shrunk, could dangers brave,
Last at his cross, and earliest at his grave.”

In most families employing domestics, there are more or less children. The opinion which they form of a person's piety is important; hence every domestic should guard against all habits not worthy of a child's imitation; and, for the sake of the child's influence in after life, and its present and eternal salvation, they should maintain a holy and exemplary life before them.

One word more: God has delegated to the poorest, the most obscure and feeble saint, the power to move the hand that moves the world. A domestic may, through grace, so contract the habit of believing prayer as to make the entire world feel its effect. Through this mighty weapon, she may help sustain the pillars of the nation; speak to the hearts of thousands through

the ministrations of the pulpit ; and through all the vast machinery of human life scatter the hallowing influences of the Holy Ghost. O ! then, lay hold on this blood-bought privilege ! Come up in this way to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

“Lord over all, sent to fulfil
Thy gracious Father’s sov’reign will,
To thy dread sceptre will I bow ;
With duteous rev’rence at thy feet,
Like humble Mary, lo ! I sit ;
Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth now.

“Renew thine image, Lord, in me ;
Lowly and gentle may I be ;
No charms but these to thee are dear ;
No anger may’st thou ever find,
No pride in my unruffled mind,
But faith and heaven-born peace be there.

“A patient, a victorious mind,
That life and all things casts behind,
Ssprings forth obedient to thy call ;
A heart that no desire can move,
But still to’ adore, believe, and love,
Give me, my Lord, my life, my all !”

CHAPTER IX.

HOW CHILDREN MAY DO GOOD.

THE design of this chapter is to give a few examples of youthful piety and usefulness, to encourage young persons to devote themselves in early life to usefulness and duty. The first sketch we shall give is that of Thomas Reader, taken from "Barker's Parent's Monitor." He was born in 1725. His parents early taught him the great principles of religion, and it is said of his pious mother, that she would frequently take her children separately into her chamber, to impress their infant minds with a concern for their salvation. We are also told that it was "her custom, in the absence of her husband, when her children arrived at the age of fourteen, to put them on the exercise of family prayer, in consequence of which, it was not remembered that this duty had ever been once omitted in their house for more than forty years."

"When Thomas was about eight years old, the house being one evening full of company, he had not a convenient place for his devotions; but, unwilling to omit what he knew to be his

duty, he went into his father's wool-loft to enjoy the pleasure of communion with God. At first he felt some childish fears, on account of his lonely situation; but afterwards his mind was so filled with thoughts of God, and the joys of religion, that he soon forgot the gloominess of the place."

We could earnestly wish all our young readers would remember and imitate this example, and always, like Thomas, attend to the duty of secret prayer; for if this duty is faithfully attended to, and in a right spirit, it will ensure present and eternal happiness. Thomas was remarkable for his observance of this duty. At one time, "during his childhood, a person being on a visit at his father's, Thomas was appointed to sleep with him. After the gentleman had retired to his chamber, the pious little boy knocked at the door, requesting him to let him go through his room to an inner closet, which he used to frequent for the exercise of prayer. The conscience of the visitor severely smote him. What, thought he, is this little child so anxious to obtain a place for devout retirement, while I have never prayed in my life? It led him to serious reflections, which, through the Divine blessing, was the happy means of his conversion; and he afterwards became not only

a true Christian, but a valuable minister of the gospel.

“At the age of fifteen, Thomas was taken into the fellowship of the Church.” He became a zealous and useful minister of Christ, and died at the age of sixty-nine.

Another incident, from the same book, is very instructive. It relates to John Bailey, whom “his pious mother dedicated at a very early period to the service of God.” From a child he knew the Holy Scriptures, and was by them made “wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” He gave evidence of his gracious state by his habitual fear of God, and the practice of daily prayer. This was attended by one very remarkable and happy effect. His father was a wicked man; and his mother took him, while he was a child, and calling the family together, caused him to pray with them. His father, hearing how the child prayed with the family, was so struck with conviction, that it proved the means of his conversion to God. This dear youth afterward became a preacher of the gospel. “In Ireland, in New-England, and other places, he laboured with great success, and suffered much in his Master’s cause. He was a man of great holiness, and of so tender a conscience, that, if he had been but inno-

cently pleasant in the company of his friends, it cost him afterward some sad reflections, through fear that he had grieved the Holy Spirit of God." He had a very strong affection for the Bible, and on one occasion said, "O, 'tis a dear book,—'tis always new!" "His last words were," speaking of Christ, "O, what shall I say? He is altogether lovely! O, all our praises of Him are poor and low things!" And then added, "His glorious angels are come for me!"

A gentleman, with whom the writer has some acquaintance, has given the following account of his own conversion to Christ. In early life he had embraced the opinion that all men would finally be saved, whatever might be their character in this life. With these dangerous notions, and a heart estranged from God, he had entered upon the duties of a public-school teacher. Among his scholars was a little girl whose mind was interested in the things of religion. One day, while he was directing the studies of his school, he told her to write a piece of composition; the child obeyed, and presented him with a serious religious address, with evident design on her part to benefit his soul. On receiving the address, and by glancing over it perceiving its character, he was displeased, and put it away without examination. For this his conscience smote him,

and he resolved to give it a perusal ; having done so, it produced upon his mind deep and serious impressions, which ultimately led him to Christ, as the Saviour of all who repent and believe on Him with a heart unto righteousness. This same gentleman became afterward a worthy member of an evangelical church, and entered on a course of study preparatory to the ministry. He is now preserved to be a watchman on the walls of Zion.

We would say to every one who may read this sketch, Be encouraged to make what effort you can for the good of others. God is able to bless your feeblest endeavours, and will do so, if they are made with a single aim to honour and glorify him.

Still another very interesting affair, with which the writer has been personally acquainted, is as follows :—A pious daughter, who was converted through the personal efforts of a Christian neighbour, was deeply interested for the conversion of her beloved mother, and consequently prayed and laboured almost incessantly for this object. She also sought the prayers and assistance of some of her Christian friends. It was not many weeks before the mother earnestly sought the Lord, and received an evidence of His pardoning love. This mother, after her conversion, became eminent for her prayers and personal exertions in behalf of others. She thus lived about eight

years, and then triumphantly passed to the mansions of eternal rest. When on her dying bed, she spoke in grateful terms of her daughter,—attributing, under God, the conversion of her soul to the faithfulness of this pious child. The surviving children of that devoted mother are unanimous in their testimony that they never knew, from the time of their mother's conversion to the day of her death, of her being in company with an unconverted person, if it were only for a few minutes, when there was a suitable opportunity to converse with them about the welfare of their souls, but she did it. She was also much engaged in prayer for all such persons as she had spoken with. On one occasion a pedler came to her house, to whom she gave a tract, and at the same time besought him not to rest without an interest in Christ. Not long after this, one of her children providentially met this man, who stated the circumstance of her presenting the tract, and how faithfully she urged upon him immediate attention to the concerns of his soul; and added that he had since found Christ, to the joy of his heart. How many others were thus blessed, eternity alone can reveal.

The daughter also, who was thus happily instrumental in the conversion of her beloved parent, lived about ten years after that event, and

then finished her course with joy. After bidding farewell to her relatives and friends who were about her bed, she exclaimed with her dying breath, "I am happy!—I am happy!!—I am happy!!!"

If we would thus triumphantly pass through death, we too should be diligent in the work of God, trusting in Jesus; and then, like all the saints, we shall realize his power to save in that trying hour.

The following is another instance of youthful piety and usefulness:—One of the children of a large family was brought to a knowledge of the truth. The parents were both unconverted. The pious child became deeply anxious for a change in her circumstances, thinking it would be impossible, situated as she was, to retain, for any length of time, the comforts of religion. In this she afterward saw that she was mistaken, for God verified his promises to her, "As thy day, so shall thy strength be;" and, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

One day, having visited the house of a neighbour on an errand, she was about stepping out of the door to return home, when a pious friend, who happened to be there, and who apparently felt the weight of responsibility which he knew was resting upon her, said, with evident emotion,

“My child, you must pray a great deal!” This was all that he said, but it was enough. God accompanied it with the quickening energy of the Holy Ghost to her heart. It was remembered and felt by her through life. From this time she seemed to realize that the souls of her unconverted kindred were committed to her care.

Amid many tears, conflicts, and trials, surrounded by continually opposing influences, she persevered in her Christian course about six years without seeing any of them converted, although some of them were frequently under serious awakenings. She used very often to retire at an early hour,—sometimes before sunset,—to her chamber, to pray for them individually, and thus continued these exercises so long as she could keep awake, or her physical strength would permit. In this way she spent much time upon her knees when the other members of her family were reposing upon their beds.

About six years passed away before any of the family were converted to God, and then one after the other, till nearly the whole of that large family professed to find the “pearl of great price.” She lived to see a number of them die happy in the Lord. Thus were the promises of God fulfilled to her faith, and she was permitted to realize, that “they that sow in tears shall reap

in joy." Such instances should encourage young persons to seek the Lord early, and to enter heartily into his service.

We have now shown some of the ways in which even children may do good; but if any of our young readers desire to be useful, they should remember that they must be good themselves in order to be prepared to do good to others.

First; a cheerful and hearty obedience to parents and guardians is necessary. God requires this of every child; and he that disregards this requirement, disobeys his best friend,—his heavenly Father. He should also diligently attend to his Sabbath and week-day schools. This has much to do with our happiness and usefulness through life. He should be studious, and labour to be wise and good. Ignorance and wickedness tend to misery and disgrace, both in this world and in the world to come. He must try every day to benefit others as well as himself,—to make the world better for his being in it.

Let every day begin and end with God,—in devout prayer, meditation, and reading of the Holy Scriptures. In all these things which have been named, let PERSEVERANCE be the motto. A habit of this kind is of very great importance. A spirit of diligent perseverance will accomplish wonders; and it should be remembered that

only by small beginnings every great point has been gained. The following rather singular story is an illustration of this sentiment:—"A Vizier, having offended his master, was condemned to perpetual captivity in a lofty tower. At night his wife came to weep below his window. 'Cease your grief,' said the sage; 'go home for the present, and return hither when you have procured a live black beetle, together with a little *ghee*, (or buffalo's butter,) three *clews*,—one of the finest silk, another of stout pack-thread, and another of whip-cord,—finally, a stout coil of rope.' When she again came to the foot of the tower, provided according to her husband's commands, he directed her to touch the head of the insect with a little of the *ghee*, to tie one end of the silk thread around him, and to place the reptile on the wall of the tower. Seduced by the smell of the butter, which he conceived to be in store somewhere above him, the beetle continued to ascend till he reached the top, and thus put the Vizier in possession of the roll of silk thread. He then drew up the pack-thread by means of the silk; the small cord by means of the pack-thread, and by means of the cord, a stout rope capable of sustaining his own weight,—and thus he escaped from the tower."

Now, my dear reader, do not laugh over

this story without taking the moral. Whatever good you would do, lay your plans, and then PERSEVERE.

“We are but young—yet we may sing
The praises of our heavenly King;
He made the earth, the sea, the sky,
And all the starry worlds on high.

“We are but young—yet we must die;
Perhaps our latter end is nigh;
Lord, may we early seek thy grace,
And find in Christ a hiding-place.

“We are but young—we need a guide;
Jesus, in thee we would confide
O lead us in the path of truth,
Protect and bless our helpless youth.

“We are but young—yet God has shed
Unnumber’d blessings on our head;
Then let our youth and riper days
Be all devoted to his praise.”

CHAPTER X.

SEAMEN'S DEPARTMENT.

A VARIETY of causes often induce young persons to quit their homes and friends, and their social and public advantages, for the privations and dangers of a sea-faring life. Speaking of these causes, the Rev. J. A. James, in his book entitled, "The Young Man from Home," says—"In some cases it is a mere curiosity to see the world; in others, a restless, dissatisfied, and indolent disposition; in others, a still worse cause; while in some it is a step to which they are called by the plans of Providence, and which circumstances render, if not absolutely necessary, yet every way proper."

Few if any other pursuits are entered upon so inconsiderately as is generally the case in the choice of this one; and the motives that commonly lead to the choice of it are in a great many cases wholly defective. The author just quoted says, they "are rarely laudable, and often criminal." So far as we have had opportunity for knowing, this declaration is too painfully true. There is not, however, so much blame to be attached to seamen for this state of things as some may imagine. Generally speaking, they are pos-

sessed of a strong, generous, and adventurous disposition ; and if left in childhood without proper moral and religious training, it produces those painful results. Hence their parents and guardians must take a share of the responsibility.

But it is not our object to find fault with the sailor, as though he were a sinner above others. No ! we can say, in sincerity of heart,—

“There is something in the ‘honest tar,’
Whose home is on the distant sea,
Within the wake of Neptune’s car,
That often brings him near to me.”

From our dwelling we can behold every vessel that sails in and out of the port of Boston. Thus situated, we could not, if we chose, forget the mariner. Every storm that sweeps over the sea and land, brings up to our mind the “perils of the deep ;” and God is our witness, how ardently we desire that those who “do business upon the great waters,” may be prepared, through grace, to encounter these perils, and to pass, if called, without fear, through the billowy deep to the port of heaven. No class of men die so suddenly, and, to themselves, so unexpectedly. It is stated in the Sailors’ Magazine, “that an average of at least three vessels and sixteen sailors are lost at sea every day, or more than one thousand vessels and five thousand and seven

hundred seamen every year!" How sudden and unexpected are such deaths! The reflection is solemn and painful,—fearfully so; to the unprepared and unrenewed sinner it is an awful plunge.

Seamen not only die suddenly and unexpectedly, but they die young,—they fall victims in the prime of manhood to the greedy sea. In looking over the report of deaths for nine months at the Seamen's Hospital on Staten Island, New-York, we notice that the average age of fifty-four seamen, who "died in that place during that time, was less than twenty-seven, and only two were over fifty, and nearly two-thirds of the whole number were under thirty. Yes! brother sailors, unquestionable facts prove that you are short-lived. Death is doing a quick and awful work for you. God is speaking to you, by the voice of his providences, in most decided and emphatic language. Will you hear and heed that voice? Will you see to it that your soul is insured without delay, and your passport to heaven sealed with the King's signet? What is done for you, and what you do for yourself, must be done quickly. It should be done to-day."

"I was once," says a certain writer, "at sea in a storm. One of the passengers was greatly alarmed. 'Sir,' said a friend to him, 'is not your

life insured?' 'No,' was the reply; 'is yours?' 'Yes, long ago.' 'Where?' 'In the insurance office above; the best, because the safest, insurance office in creation. Get your name entered there, and you have nothing to fear. What if the winds blow and the waves roll? What if this frail vessel goes to the bottom? With your life insured there, all will be well.' 'Yes, sir,' he replied, 'I know it, I know it, but—' 'But what?' 'Now is not the time to do it.' 'Yes it is—' 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' " Yes, now is the time, the only time which God hath designated, in which life and salvation may be obtained.

Those who are connected with a seafaring life may do much for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause. Yes!

"Sailor! we need thee, to extend
Thy hand to lost and ruin'd men,
Thy noblest efforts to expend,
To bring our race to God again."

But there are many hindrances to the usefulness of this class of persons, some of which we will now proceed to notice.

One of these is, their profanity. Among seamen, the use of profane language is a most prevalent and debasing sin. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain."

How aggravated, then, must be the guilt of those who are perpetually trifling with the Divine name. Such cannot be useful in spreading abroad the Saviour's name, till the Lord shall "pour a pure language upon them."

Intemperance is another common sin of the sailor when he is ashore. This is no less ruinous to the best interests of soul and body, than profanity. It prepares the way for almost every species of crime and wretchedness. Beware, then, of the first glass! Shun the snare, lest you be taken and overcome; and thus be prevented doing that good which you otherwise would do. A sailor just returned from a prosperous voyage, secured a good boarding-place, and a temperate room-mate, hoping thereby to escape the bondage of his former intemperate habits. Having eaten his supper in usual health, he was enticed into a dram-shop, and was there plied with liquor until he was unable to help himself. Late in the evening he was helped back to his lodgings, where he died in a few moments. Far from home, in the prime of manhood, and in a land of strangers, he fell a prey to the accursed arts of the rumseller. He had purposed to visit his poor widowed mother, to relieve her wants, and to make her comfortable; but his purpose was never realized. How painful his fall! How

heart-rending to her that bore him ! Let this, by no means a solitary incident, prove a warning to others to steer clear of the fatal whirlpool into which thousands have been drawn, and carried down the gulf of infamy and death.

Sabbath-breaking is another prevalent sin among sailors, both on shore and on ship-board. When at sea, the same daily routine of labour is frequently performed as on other days. This is often exacted by the owners and officers of vessels. Thus the command to "remember the Sabbath-day, and keep it holy," is set at naught, and the sacred rights of the crew are violated. No wonder that sailors thus habituated to Sabbath-breaking when at sea, should do so when on shore. Here let us suggest to owners and officers of vessels to consider seriously the solemn account which must soon be rendered at the bar of God, for this great wickedness. How will you stand before that tribunal ? O beware ! lest the blood of your brother's soul cry unto God in that day from the depths of perdition against you !

See to it, then, while you may, that you are not accessory to their destruction, by allowing Sabbath-breaking and other sins to be committed which it is in your power to prevent. The calling of seamen subjects them necessarily to many

privations ; these should not be increased beyond necessity. We would say to pious seamen, in view of these privations, Be not discouraged. Make the best efforts which your circumstances will permit for the observance of the Sabbath and other means of grace. Be much in prayer ; daily study the word of God ; engage on the Sabbath in no other than strictly religious and edifying conversation ; read good books. This should be resolutely determined upon by every Christian sailor. God will meet and bless with his approving smiles all who do so. May sovereign grace assist you to be faithful in these duties.

We would further suggest, that on going to sea you should furnish yourself with a stock of good reading, and exchange it one with another. Provide writing materials also, and use them too, in sketching passing events, for the benefit of those whom you leave at home, or for any other laudable purpose. Have a proper regard to health and cleanliness. Be patient and quiet under provocations and injuries ; render not railing for railing, but contrariwise good for evil, blessing for cursing. An observance of these things will add much to your comfort and influence. When on shore, look out for the "land-sharks." They are numerous. Would that this caution was not needed ; but of all the perils to

which you are exposed, the perils on land are the most fatal. The prowling beasts of prey are on every hand to rob you of your money, your health, your reputation, your comfort, your life, your soul. Therefore be vigilant; seek the "Bethel," and mingle only with the people of God, unless you have strength to go among others as an honest physician among the sick, to do them good, and not to catch their diseases.

We might continue our remarks, but prefer to present a few sketches concerning the work of God through the personal efforts of seamen, hoping it may be an inducement to others "to go and do likewise."

The following account of a revival of religion on board the ship *Uncas*, when at sea, in which more than half the crew were hopefully converted, is given by the mate, and published in the "Sailors' Magazine." He says:—

"We sailed from New-Bedford August 5th, 1843. Nothing of a religious nature was alluded to until December 12, 1843, when we spoke ship A——, Captain B., who came on board, and took tea with us. A blessing was asked by him, of that God whom he professed to love. I date the moving of the Spirit of God on our hearts at the simple performance of this duty by Captain B. Soon after Captain B. left,

I held some conversation with Captain G., of our ship, on the subject of religion, my mind being much exercised with the importance of living and being an active Christian. I found, like myself, that Captain G. was impressed with the importance of living a holy life. He told me nothing would be more pleasing to him than to have the ship's company become pious. We often conversed on the subject of religion; but nothing of importance transpired until the 26th of March, 1844, when Captain G. spoke to me, informing me he had a duty to discharge; that he could not withstand any longer the convictions of his conscience. It was a duty upon which his eternal interest hung; a duty he owed to his God, to himself, to his pious wife and friends, who had long prayed for him: that duty was, to commence prayer with his officers and crew. He wished me to accompany him: I assented; that evening we joined in prayer together in the cabin, in behalf of ourselves and our shipmates. The following evening all hands were notified of a prayer-meeting, which nearly all attended, and three requested an interest in our prayers.

“Our meetings were continued every evening, when the weather permitted: the third evening there were four rejoicing in the Lord; and so it

continued until the fifth of April, when there were fifteen that had indulged hope, and were enjoying 'that peace which is like a river, and that righteousness which is like the waves of the sea.'

"Two more of the crew were converted on our passage home.

"We sustained our meetings from the commencement until our arrival in this port; and when we parted, it was with tender feelings, but not as those who part without hope. We parted with the hope of meeting again beyond the grave, 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.'"

The following thrilling narrative we gather from the same source as the preceding one. It is an extract from the report of a seamen's chaplain on the river Thames. He says, at the close of a public religious meeting, which he held on board the M——: "I was led to speak to a sailor, superior in his appearance, who had prayed with great earnestness and propriety at this meeting.

" 'Well, friend, how was your mind first seriously impressed?'

" 'Why, sir, my conversion was rather singular. Eighteen months ago I left England on an eighteen months' voyage to the Cape of Good

Hope, the Isle of France, &c. Our crew consisted of nineteen men, including the captain and mate. The books that I took to sea were a Bible, a hymn-book, and Baxter's Saint's Rest. I had read the last before at home, again and again. But not long after we had been at sea, I was one night reading it, when my mind was so powerfully affected that I was compelled at once to cry aloud to God to have mercy on my soul. My fellow-seamen said I was going out of my mind. But I continued to pray, and God was graciously pleased to hear and answer my requests. I then spoke to the cook seriously and solemnly about his soul, and prayed to God for myself and the whole ship's company. The cook's mind became religiously impressed, and he soon joined me in reading the Scriptures and prayer; and he became decided for God and his cause. We now united together to admonish and exhort our brother sailors to prepare for death and eternity. After this another and another joined us, and we met in the dog-watch, from 6 o'clock to 8, to hold a prayer-meeting, and wrestle with God in earnest supplication for our own souls' salvation, and the conversion of the crew. The mate next engaged our attention. He could not attend our meeting until twelve o'clock: for his benefit, therefore, we altered the

time of our meeting, and assembled always afterward at that hour until we arrived at the Cape.

“ ‘ Our frequent meetings for prayer, and admonitions to the men, produced a most favourable change in their conduct ; so much so, that the captain being much pleased therewith, when we arrived at the Cape of Good Hope he went ashore, and bought hymn-books for the sailors, and made a present of one to each of his men, as well as other books for their use on their passage home.

“ ‘ On returning to England, the captain allowed us to have our prayer-meetings on the quarter-deck, and attended them himself. We felt grateful for this favour, and at every meeting our captain was prayed for especially ; and the result was, the captain was converted—the cabin then became our house of prayer—and the whole crew were new creatures in Christ Jesus before we returned.

“ ‘ On our arrival home, after we had been paid off from the ship, we resolved, seventeen in number, to remain together while we were on shore ; and for this purpose we took a house in the neighbourhood of the London Docks, where we lodged and boarded. We continued to do on shore what we had done on board of ship, namely,—read the Bible, pray to God, and sing

his praises. We remained together as long as we could, but at last were reluctantly called to part. We separated with many tears, and our little company have gone to the north, to the south, to the east, and to the west; and here am I, and perhaps shall not see any of them again until I meet them at the judgment-seat of Christ.' ”

Blessed company! You will soon meet there; and, if faithful to the end of life's short voyage, you will be welcomed to the port of everlasting blessedness, where parting shall be known no more.

Similar sketches might be continued, but these suffice to show the good influence which attends faithful Christian effort in behalf of the sailor, as well as of others. We do not know a class of men more susceptible of a kindness than seamen, especially when poor, or sick, or otherwise afflicted. “When ye will, ye may do them good.” Then

“Heed, O heed the wandering sailor,
On the land, or on the sea;
For his precious soul's salvation,
Often lowly bend the knee.”

The Saviour, while sojourning on the earth, often mingled with those who obtained their livelihood upon the water. He resorted to their

ships, and taught them the way of life and salvation; and, from among them, he chose some of his most intimate and efficient labourers. Such he ordained and commissioned to go "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" such, he chose to defend it against the assaults of the learned and great ones of the earth. Thus he would convince us, that it is not through the excellency of human speech, wisdom, or power, that souls are saved. God works by the instrumentality of his saints,—whether they are learned or unlearned, whether rich or poor; whether master or servant, sailor or landsman: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." An instance of this may be seen in the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts. We learn in this chapter, that the Apostle Paul was a prisoner on board a ship containing two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. Although thus situated, he manifested a deep interest for the welfare of that large company. He counselled and admonished them; but they heeded it not. An angel came and made known unto the apostle what was about to transpire among them, and to encourage his heart, said, "Fear not, Paul; lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee, for there shall be no loss of any man's life, but of the ship." Paul there-

fore declared this Divine message to the company, and expressed his confidence and faith by saying, "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." The sequel showed that God verified his word to his servant,—not a man perished, although there were so many; but the vessel went to pieces.

The owners and officers of the ship no longer rejected the counsel of the devoted prisoner. They dared not do it; they saw that God was with him, and "did let none of his words fall to the ground." Thus it is with every truly devoted Christian. Wherever he may go, wherever he may be, an involuntary homage is rendered to that religion whose transforming power restores man to his pristine beauty and excellence.

In conclusion, we would say to our seafaring friends, "Trust none but God; live supremely for Christ; rely upon the Holy Ghost; look for your reward above earth, and beyond time."

May the "God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land," shield you amid the perils attendant on life's short voyage, and finally bring your vessel, richly laden with souls,—the fruits of your labours,—to the port of immortal bliss.

CHAPTER XI.

COMBINATION OF PERSONAL EFFORT.

It is a true saying, that union is strength. This is emphatically true in matters of benevolent and Christian efforts. The Bible affords us many precious attestations of this fact:—"One shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." In sending out the twelve, and the seventy disciples, to promulgate the Gospel, Jesus "sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come." In dealing with a wayward disciple, he also said, "If he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of one or two witnesses every word may be established." Then again, in reference to prayer, he says, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." In another chapter, on the power of prayer, will be found a blessed fulfilment of this promise.

Without a spirit of union, no two individuals can walk or labour together so as to promote the interests of Zion. It is, doubtless, owing to

a lack of this spirit in the churches that revivals of religion are so few and short-lived. God cannot, consistently with his government, bless a church where the spirit of an Achan dwells. In one, and we know not in how many other instances, the Divine blessing has been withheld from the whole camp of Israel on account of the wrong spirit and acts of one individual. It is feared very few churches exist at the present day where there are no such hindrances to the work of God. Dear reader, is thy heart right with the Holy One of Israel? And is it right toward his people? If not, you are "standing in the way of sinners." O let us individually search and try our ways!

The writer, some years since, became convinced that if ever the gospel shall be preached in all the world and to every creature, there must be a coming back to primitive usages, when every Christian was a labourer for God and the souls of men. The pulpit in those days was not so exclusively depended on as at the present time. Every individual Christian, in his or her sphere, is called to be a witness and labourer for Jesus; and in so doing, souls may and will be saved, whatever may be the condition of the Church as a body, or the character of her pulpit ministrations. Organizations do not,—

cannot destroy individualism. When this fact is recognized, and union is based upon such a principle, then it is that combined Christian influence and effort are mighty in pulling down the strongholds of sin and error.

The love, the confidence, and the union of spirit which David and Jonathan possessed, exhibit to our mind the feeling and principle which should bind together the hearts that would labour for the salvation of souls. But we shall not enter into the theory of our subject, but rather rely on the facts and incidents which it is our object to present to illustrate and enforce the duty in question. The following, it is thought, can hardly fail to encourage the pious reader to renewed exertions in the cause of our blessed Redeemer.

In 1839, three pious females covenanted together to labour for the conversion of the husband of one of them. This man was a great trifler with the subject of religion; he very seldom attended the public worship, and was in the habit of indulging at times very freely in intoxicating drinks. These things, and some others which might be mentioned, made his case apparently one of the most discouraging on which to try the power of Christian faith and effort. The result of this case should teach us that nothing

is too hard for God—that with him all things are possible.

Through Divine assistance, these pious friends resolved to pray for this man's conversion. At the time of this engagement he knew nothing of it; neither did they let him know it till after he became deeply serious and apparently penitent. These Christian labourers narrowly watched, so far as they were able, all his movements. The first omens of good which were discoverable about him, were his occasionally taking up the Bible to read before retiring to rest at night; then he began to attend public worship a part of the day on the Sabbath; in a few weeks after, he would go all day, and then occasionally to a week-evening prayer-meeting, and would sometimes kneel in his family while prayer was offered in his behalf. These indications of Divine influence upon his heart were grasped with eager gratitude by his anxious friends, and by them they were led to hope for a speedy answer to their united petitions. Perhaps, as the sequel will show, these Christians erred just at this critical point; their faith partially relinquished its grasp on the promise of God, and began to mingle itself with the gratitude which they felt at the encouraging appearances. He fell back again to his old habits, and

his convictions in a great measure left him. When his praying friends saw this, they again rallied, with renewed strength and purpose of soul, for the rescue. Their prayers became more frequent and fervent, mingled with fastings and tears. Their faith again took a stronger hold on the throne of heaven. God was entreated to give the Holy Ghost in such powerful effusions as to compel him to cry out, like sinking Peter, "Save, Lord, or I perish!" These prayers were answered; his convictions returned with redoubled power, while the providences of God seemed to work against him, and conspire to make him miserable. He felt convinced that it was all for his opposition to the command of God to "repent and be converted." At length, after a conflict of about two years' continuance, he yielded to the power of grace, and was accepted in the Beloved.

When received into the Church, he publicly testified to the faithfulness of these Christian friends, attributing, under God, his conversion to their instrumentality.

About six or seven years after this blessed change, the writer learned from his pious companion that he was still a member of the church, and was adorning his profession by a pious life. Her gratitude to God seemed inexpressible.

Blessed woman ! blessed family ! All were thus made happy through the abounding goodness of God, in answer to the faithful and united prayers of his handmaidens.

Christians, in making combined effort for souls, should proceed with the utmost caution and prudence. If the sinner suspects anything like a secret conspiracy to turn him from his course, and to make him a proselyte to a party, he will very likely resist every effort which can be made by his friends to save him. With some individuals, open combat would be the most judicious and successful ; but, with others, well-directed private attacks would do best. To discern and take the right course, the wisdom which is " profitable to direct " will be necessary : " If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God," in faith, and he shall have it.

When private attacks are to be made upon a sinner by a number of Christians, arrangements should be made so as to act in concert. For instance, let each one, or such ones as can consistently do so, labour alone in succession, or otherwise, with the sinner, and then meet to talk and pray over the subject. If the sinner manifest becoming seriousness, bring him into the company, and pray with him as well as for him. Here let it be remarked, that those Christians

who thus labour, should be very careful how they betray the confidence which a sinner may repose in them ; great evils have resulted from such ungenerous conduct. Every pious friend of the impenitent who has extorted a confession of the sinner's feelings, or to whom the confession is voluntarily made, should never betray them, unless it is clearly manifest that it will be for his own advantage ; and then to such only as can be trusted, and who will do all in their power to rescue the deathless spirit from ruin.

We would here suggest to that professor of religion, whose outward life at some former period has not corresponded with his profession, to approach the sinner with a confession of his own short-comings and waywardness, and give due praise to God for his redeeming grace : for it will be in vain for one to labour for the spiritual welfare of souls, who has not the confidence of those for whom he is engaged. Such a confession, too, will often do much toward opening the sinner's heart, and to prepare him to receive the reproofs and admonitions that may be given. Before the professor can get at the sinner's heart, he must lay his own not only at the feet of Jesus, but, if need be, at the feet of the sinner also. Paul was not ashamed to " become all things to all men," if he could but win them to Christ.

Rev. Robert Young, in his volume entitled, "Suggestions for the Conversion of the World," remarks, that "the parties adopting this mode of working," that is, making personal efforts to save souls, 'must be careful to use the divinely appointed means in the way most likely to produce the desired result. It is not enough for a Christian merely to speak to a sinner about his soul, but he must speak fitly; for a 'word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.' There must be a fitness, not only in the *character* and *manner* of the speaker, but in his spirit and manner of speaking; or, instead of softening, he will harden the hearts of those to whom he speaks, and excite powerful prejudice against the gospel of Christ. An abrupt and uncourteous manner, and a harsh and domineering spirit, are not only inconsistent with the Christian character, but they render that which is spoken, however good in itself, unfit for edification. 'Speaking the truth in *love*,' is the rule which the apostle lays down."

In the volume last named, we are told of "three young men, private members of the Wesleyan Connexion, of most fervent and decided piety," who adopted the principle we are now endeavouring to enforce; "and so successful were their efforts that above thirty persons, of

whose conversion no rational doubt could be entertained, were *in one year* led to the sinner's Friend by their truly benevolent exertions.

"We have also known classes in the Wesleyan Connexion," says the same author, "act upon this principle; and, generally speaking, they have in the course of one year doubled their numbers; and one class for a considerable time doubled its number every quarter, and was divided four times a year."

Let others resolve to "go and do likewise." If the maxim of the immortal Carey were adopted, to wit: "*Attempt great things—expect great things*," then would great things be done. God is able, he is willing; yea, he waits to have the tithes brought into his house, into his service, that he may "open the windows of heaven, and pour out such a blessing that there shall not be room enough to contain it."

Before closing this chapter, we will give one more brief incident to show that God sometimes merges the influence and efforts of his people in such a manner that they do not perceive any outward fruits of their labours; nevertheless, to the eye of faith it visibly exists. He who hath said, "Cast thy bread upon the waters," has also said, "thou shalt find it after many days." "Ye know," says the apostle, that "your labour

is not in vain in the Lord." "In due season ye shall reap,"—if not in time, ye shall in eternity. Be encouraged then to labour faithfully, and leave the result with God.

A gentleman, known to the writer, for whose salvation many Christians had prayed and laboured, personally and unitedly, was converted when alone in his house, with the exception of one member of his family. On being asked to state, if he could, the instrumentality of his conversion, he thought awhile, and finally replied, that so many Christians had been made a blessing to him, that he could not fix his mind on any one in particular. This is the case with a great many, perhaps the majority of those who are saved. It may be in answer to the secret prayer of faith, offered by some obscure Christian, that a sinner is publicly reached through the ministrations of the pulpit; or, through some afflicting dispensation of God's providence. Happy will it be for any Christian, to be a participant in any way in such a work as that of saving a soul from death. And how happy too is the reflection that God knows how to do it, and will, in a coming day, apportion unto every individual labourer that recompense of reward which he has promised.

CHAPTER XII.

ON VISITING.

OUR social relations, and the intercourse of friends, open a wide and inviting field for Christian usefulness. Were this field properly regarded, and cultivated as it should be, there would be an end to the making of idle calls, and of the sinful and senseless gossip that too often occupies the time of professors of religion. This evil is more extensive and injurious to the welfare of the Church than many are aware of; and one that calls loudly for reform. Our time is too precious to be squandered upon such follies, and the consequences depending on the proper use of our time are too momentous to be disregarded,—for

“A point of time, a moment’s space,
Removes us to that heavenly place,
Or shuts us up in hell.”

If this were always kept in mind, we would find

“No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope or worldly fear,
Since life so soon is gone.”

Our words, too, as well as our time, are connected with momentous consequences. In the volume of inspiration we are told, that “by thy

words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Also, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." There are very few who cannot speak an occasional good word, and fewer still who speak only good words. In visiting, especially, we should be very careful to utter nothing that may tend to injure others, in their feelings, character, or business. We should also constantly endeavour to make some impressions favourable to the cause of God and the good of souls,—such as we shall rejoice to remember at the judgment-seat of Christ.

When we meet our friends, and exchange with them our friendly greetings, the welfare of the soul as well as that of the body should be inquired after, and appropriate answers elicited. If friends should meet in such a spirit, they would be more likely to maintain a proper state of mind during their continuing together. No point more imperatively demands our watchfulness than this; for, as St. James has taught us, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body."

"In conversing on religious subjects with others," says Bickersteth; "in going to the poor

and afflicted ; in waiting for others ; in going from one place to another ; in visiting your friends ; in coming to the house of God ; in hearing his word ;—in these, and various other circumstances of our lives, the heart of the devout Christian will be sending upwards many a secret petition ; he will be silently wrestling with God, and gaining that divine blessing on all in which he is engaged, which others lose by carelessness and indifference.”

It is an evidence of a want of lively spirituality, for Christians to be accustomed to meet and part without social prayer. “ Were your social meetings thus sanctified,” says the writer last named, “ the occasional intercourse of dear friends would be more blessed than it is ; you would find it a means of grace, and would enjoy, in a much higher degree, the privilege of the communion of saints. Those who have the holy fire may be the means of enkindling the sacred flame in others. You would receive a greater blessing than you have done in all your family and social relations.” Why is there so little social prayer among those who are commanded to “ pray always ?” Where there is a real purpose of heart to do this duty, there will commonly be found a way for its performance. Let prayer, then, be offered, whenever practicable, in all our social

visits. When such exercises are expected to close a social interview, that expectation will exercise a chastening influence upon the whole company, and most effectually restrain any tendency to trifling or uncharitable conversation.

A pious lady was called, in the order of Providence, to visit a family of some six or eight persons. While there, she felt a solemn responsibility relative to the salvation of those precious souls thus providentially committed to her faithfulness. She accordingly looked to God for wisdom and strength, that she might discharge in a becoming manner her difficult and important duties, and according to her faith it was done unto her. In the course of a few weeks, through her repeated visits, conversations, and prayers, salvation came to that house, and two of the family were made partakers of everlasting life. Mrs. C., a Christian lady of our acquaintance, gives us the following sketch, which is pertinent to our theme :—Her mother was a devoted Christian. The sickness which terminated her life was a lingering consumption, which for a long time deprived her of the public means of grace. During this time her class-leader, Mr. W., visited her, and prayed with her almost every week. It so happened that, after her mother's death, she did not see the devoted class-leader for

about ten years, when they providentially met as visitors at the house of an acquaintance. Mr. W. inquired of Mrs. C. whether she was a Christian, and making her way to heaven? She replied in the negative; at which he remarked, "Well, when you are as good as your mother was, you will be fit for heaven." He said no more to her, but turned his conversation to others who were present. Mrs. C. remarked that had he entered into a lengthy conversation with her in that company, and at that time, she should have been exceedingly vexed with him; but as it was, he said enough to sustain his Christian influence, and his discreet allusion to her departed mother touched the tenderest feelings of her heart. "From that time," said Mrs. C., "his words sounded in my ears, and suggested many queries to my mind, whether I should ever be so good as my mother. These impressions continued to deepen, till I was led, through grace, to come out from the gayeties of the world and submit my heart to Christ." "A word fitly spoken, how good it is!"

In September, 1841, a young lady was visited by a pious friend, and conversed with on the subject of personal religion. She confessed she felt the need of it, and acceded to a proposition of her friend to unite their prayers for her conver-

sion. They prayed for seven days for this object, when she found the Saviour precious to her soul. She still remains to attest the value of faithful Christian visiting. We would call particular attention to the proposition of that pious friend to *unite their prayers* for her conversion. It is a most happy and useful way to proceed with partially awakened persons, and such as are halting between two opinions. Many have thus been led to a permanent decision, and, no doubt, will eternally praise God for it. In December, 1841, a pious labourer in his Master's vineyard visited a man under some concern of mind; he pointed him to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and prayed with and for him; and urged him to attend meeting the next evening. He did so. His pious friend laboured much with him, and finally succeeded in persuading him to go forward for prayers in his behalf; and there the Lord spoke peace to his soul. He united with the Church, and is now walking in the narrow way which leads to life. This last case shows us the importance of being diligent in urging forward awakened souls from step to step, till they become the happy recipients of saving mercy, and are well established in the Christian course.

Another instance of faithful visiting relates to a young convert who afterward became extensively useful in his personal efforts for and with individuals. He made his first exertion in behalf of a young lady, who lived neighbour to him, whom he visited, and tried to persuade her to seek the Lord. She became serious; so much so, that those who knew her took notice of it; there was much hope in her case. But she soon after visited some of her acquaintance who denied the great truths of Christianity, and ridiculed experimental religion as enthusiasm, and by them she was again turned away from her seriousness. After her return her pious friend renewed his efforts in her behalf, and urged upon her a preparation for death, as her health was fast failing. Again the Lord melted her hard heart to contrition and godly sorrow. She now sought an interest in the Saviour, through repentance and faith in his atoning blood, and was soon made happy in his pardoning love. She lived but a short time after this; but it was sufficiently long to afford her Christian friends a pleasing evidence that her precious soul had been renewed by the Spirit of grace. She warned others of their danger and exhorted them to seek the Lord, and then fell asleep in Jesus. Was not this a brand snatched from the

burning? Christians! take courage; persevere in your efforts, and follow poor sinners, like this devoted labourer, down to the very gates of death before you give them up for lost. *Visit them often and faithfully*; remember the thief on the cross, saved in the last hour. While there is life, there is hope.

An important part of the duty now under consideration is visiting the sick. Great stress is laid upon this in the Scriptures. St. James declares that “pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world;” and our Lord, in describing the process of the day of judgment, makes attention to, or neglect of this duty, the mark of distinction between the righteous and the wicked. Probably there is no condition into which the providence of God brings unconverted persons, more favourable to the success of Christian efforts than when they are laid on their sick-beds. At such times the Holy Spirit generally co-operates with the hand of Providence in arousing the conscience, and alarming the guilty fears of the soul. Much prudence and skill are requisite in such cases, and the Christian labourer will need to seek for that wisdom that comes down from above, to

direct him in his efforts. There is great danger that the awakened sufferer will be lulled into a false security, and even the kindness of the Christian heart may lead to the use of too much of consolation when reproof is more needed. At such times we should deal honestly with the subjects of our benevolent labours; and in no case say "Peace, peace," without the most satisfactory evidence that God has spoken peace. In such cases persons too often mistake their alarm for true penitence, and fondly hope when there are no good grounds for so doing. Where this is the case, if they recover, their goodness is found to be "as the morning cloud and the early dew;" it passes away. Little confidence can be placed in the repentance and professed conversions of the sick, till tested by a life of obedience and piety. Still, the possibility that a soul may be saved from death should stimulate every Christian to labour, and that most assiduously, for the conversion of those who seem to be appointed to a speedy death. Many doubtless have been so saved, and it is always safe to point the sinner to Him who is the only refuge for the guilty.

Physicians have frequent opportunities to whisper the sweet name of Jesus in the ear of the sufferer; hence they are peculiarly called to

this duty,—to be a physician to the soul as well as to the body. The following extract from Baxter's "Saint's Everlasting Rest" is so appropriate to this point, that we give it in preference to anything we can say :—

"Physicians," says he, "that are much about dying men, should in a special manner make conscience of this duty. It is their peculiar advantage that they are at hand; that they are with men in sickness and dangers, when the ear is open, and the heart less stubborn than in time of health; and that men look upon their physician as a person in whose hands is their life; or, at least, who may do much to save them; and therefore they will the more readily regard his advice. You that are of this honourable profession, do not think this a work beside your calling, as if it belonged to none but ministers; except you think it beside your calling to be compassionate, or to be Christians. O help, therefore, to fit your patients for heaven! and whether you see they are for life or death, teach both how to live and die, and give them some physic for their souls, as you do for their bodies."

When God, by means of affliction, humbles the proud nature of man, then a Saviour's love, his kind offices, his precious promises, his rich blessings, free and full for all, will sound like

music to the pious sufferer, and will also have a most powerful tendency to draw the sinner to yield his heart to God. Happy will it be for that Christian who is always ready to administer such a healing cordial, such

“A sovereign balm for every wound.”

Another powerful motive to the performance of this duty is found in the fact, that in times of affliction the families of sick persons are especially susceptible of the good influence of Christian efforts. They then feel the need of sympathy, and readily take hold of the consolations afforded by the gospel of Christ. The house of mourning is thus often made the avenue to the glorious privileges of the children of God. If the Christian labourer is taught to sow his seed in all places and circumstances, he is also especially instructed to co-operate with the providence and grace of God, by which alone his labours can be made useful. Let those who would win souls to Christ, therefore, seek out the sick and afflicted, to minister to their wants, to relieve their sufferings, or to sympathize with them when relief cannot be obtained; and especially to mingle the sweet invitations of heavenly love with the sorrowing cries of human wretchedness; to tell the labouring and heavy-laden

souls of the rest that remains for the people of God.

Personal interest should also incline the Christian to this course of action. The rewards of heaven are made to depend in a marked manner upon attention to this duty. "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." Let us, then, so care for the sick and needy, that we may receive the blessings of "those who are ready to perish."

"Thee will I set at my right hand,
Whose eyes mine inmost substance see;
And labour on at thy command,
And offer all my works to thee.

"Give me to bear thy easy yoke,
And every moment watch and pray;
And still to things eternal look,
And hasten to thy glorious day:—

"For thee delightfully employ
Whate'er thy bounteous grace has given;
And run my course with even joy,
And closely walk with thee to heaven."

CHAPTER XIII.

USE AND INFLUENCE OF GOOD BOOKS.

A JUDICIOUS use of good books constitutes a very important department of Christian effort. Says an intelligent writer in reference to social and family reading of such books: "Among a thousand means of making home attractive—a main point in ethics—this stands high. What is more pleasing? What more attractive? What more rational? He would be a benefactor indeed, who should devise a plan to redeem our evenings, and to rally the young men who scatter to clubs, and taverns, and brawling assemblies. Such a reformer and inventor would deserve a garland of heart's-ease from the hands of slighted woman. Families which are in a state of mutual repulsion, have no evenings together over books or music. The master is at the frequented bar-room: the boys are at some public room, or place of amusement: the girls are abroad, in full dress: the mother sits at home in spectacles: and the several parties straggle in weary, and sometimes surly, at such hours as suit their whim, and then only as nature demands sleep. It is well even if this, at length, is not sought from home."

Another says, "The benefits of social reading are manifold. Pleasures shared with others are increased by the partnership. A book is ten-fold a book when read in the company of beloved friends, and by the ruddy fire, on the autumnal evening; and when our intellectual pleasures are bathed in domestic affection."

By this simple means many have been instructed in the way of righteousness, restrained from vice, and led to seek an interest in the Saviour. We would therefore recommend the purchasing, loaning, giving, and commending good books. We live in a book-making and a book-reading age. But we regret to say, that a large portion of the books and newspapers now in circulation have a tendency to corrupt and lead the heart away from God and duty. On this account, and also to hedge up, so far as possible, the way of wicked writers and publishers, the Christian should be careful what he reads, and what he is instrumental in causing others to read. That man who poisons the food on which the body subsists, is guiltless compared with him who poisons the food on which the immortal soul subsists. One is but a temporary evil, while the other is eternally ruinous. Let this consideration serve as a caution to our readers not to buy, loan, or otherwise extend the circulation of

pernicious books and periodicals. The press has an immense power, for good or for evil. It should, therefore, be watched and guarded with a jealous eye.

It is the duty of every moral and Christian man to support, so far as in him lies, the truly useful and religious press. The old maxim, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," should have due weight with every one who wishes to promote the welfare of society. This cannot be more effectually done than through the press. To instruct the ignorant, reform the vicious, and scatter light and life among the human family, is a noble work. We would therefore say to all our readers, Rally around the sanctified press. There are millions of minds which can be effectually reached in no other way, and few, if any, who may not be materially influenced by this.

We would suggest to committees, who purchase libraries for Sabbath-schools, or for any other object, to consider seriously the responsibility they are placed under to procure not only good moral books, but the very best books;—such as will exert a holy and practical influence upon the heart and life of the reader. We would also suggest to ministers, parents, and teachers, to weigh well their duty in this matter. Is it

not the duty of the minister to warn and counsel his hearers on this subject? And is it not the duty of parents and teachers to superintend the readings of the young?

In reference to the use of good books, it is the opinion of the writer, that generally the *giving* of them, and even of tracts, is much less calculated to do good than the *loaning* of them, especially when done by a private distributor, who feels for, and aims at, the salvation of souls. It is sometimes necessary to give; then, let it be done; but when it is not necessary, let tracts and books be loaned.

We think the following plan a good one:—Let each individual Christian furnish himself, according to his means, with a choice selection of books, and from time to time add to these works as he may be able; add also some good weekly or other periodicals. Being thus furnished, a regular and systematic course may be pursued of doing and getting good, by supplying one's friends with profitable reading.

Thus loaning books will very likely ensure their being read and preserved. It will also induce the receiver, in many cases, to set a higher estimate on a book or tract which another seems to value. Another motive for loaning in preference to giving is, that it affords the Christian of

limited means a more extensive field for benevolent effort ; it also gives him better opportunities for faithful conversation and prayer with the objects of his affectionate solicitude. There are but few ways in which every Christian can find so many opportunities to do good as in this. Let these, therefore, be faithfully and diligently improved. It would be well to induce, if possible, every person to whom a book is loaned or given, to pray for the Divine blessing on its perusal ; especially do so yourself. Few will refuse, at the request of a friend, to read an interesting work ; though some may do so when they see or suspect it to be a long, dry, uninteresting one. The mind, especially of unconverted persons, should never be unnecessarily tasked with anything repulsive to their feelings. There are some readers who will hardly look at anything but a newspaper. Let such persons be taken on their own ground ; a little sacrifice and effort on the part of the Christian may place before their minds, in newspaper form, those truths of the gospel which will imperceptibly mould their principles, affect their hearts, and lead them into the glorious light and liberty of the sons of God. To do this, the Christian needs a deep-seated principle,—a fixed faith in the power of Omnipotent grace to reach the impenitent heart through

the most simple means. Many err exceedingly on this point, as did Naaman, captain of the Syrian hosts. He wished to be cured of his leprosy; but the means which the prophet prescribed were so simple, that he was grievously disappointed. But the prophet chose a simple means to humble his proud heart, and to convince him that the excellency of the power was of God and not of man. This should teach us that the most simple effort can as well be crowned with Heaven's blessing, as a great one.

We might narrate many facts and incidents to show that books have been instrumental in the salvation of souls. One case may be found in the Seamen's Department of this work. Another, which we will give in this chapter, stands in connexion with the personal efforts of a Mrs. Carpenter, sister of the late Stephen Drew, Esq., of Jamaica. A more particular and extended account may be found in the memoirs of the devoted Wm. Carvosso, from which this extract is made. This Mr. Drew was a Barrister at Law, and for many years he lived in Jamaica, an entire stranger to God, far apart from religious people, without the means of grace, and surrounded by sensuality and sin. In 1814 his sister, Mrs. C., of Saltash, was savingly converted to God, joined the Methodist society, and soon be-

came eminent for her faith and zeal in her Master's cause. The case of her unconverted brother, dwelling in the darkness and dissipation of Jamaica, lay near her heart, and was not unfrequently the topic of her conversation. She longed for his salvation, and studied by what means she should attempt to effect it. Religious books she thought a likely instrument, and among these, Mr. Wesley's Sermons stood first in her esteem. Such was her conviction of the point and force contained in these volumes, that she expressed her belief, if she could only get them safely conveyed into her brother's hands, God would bless the perusal of them to his soul's salvation. At her request (says the biographer and son of Wm. Carvosso) I undertook to assist her in forwarding them. The books being committed to my care, with some considerable difficulty, I at length succeeded, by the assistance of my brother, in getting them delivered into Mr. Drew's own hands. After I left the circuit, I received a letter from Mrs. C., enclosing the amount of the expenses, and conveying the highly gratifying intelligence that her brother was awakened by reading the sermons; "I have heard from my brother," says she, "and have no doubt but the Lord has already made them a blessing to his soul. In his letter to me he says, 'Now I have

read Wesley's Sermons, I seem to see with new eyes. In these Sermons everything is as distinctly marked as if the writer possessed a powerful optic glass, to bring things, the most distant, home, as it were, to our very selves, so as to affect us as we were never before affected. I do believe he has the key to unlock the very mysteries of Scripture doctrine.' In the same strain he has written a long letter, speaking also of his helplessness as a sinner, and his conviction of the necessity of an entire change in heart and life. May God in his mercy make me thankful for this blessing." Another letter, soon after, conveyed to her an account of his conversion, and of his having received the witness of the Spirit. He quickly began to preach, and the Lord made his testimony an abundant blessing. Many were converted through his instrumentality, and a Church was formed in his own house.

This devoted Christian lived some ten or twelve years after his conversion, and became very eminent for his personal holiness and usefulness. "When near his death he directed his pious negroes to be brought into his room, when he addressed them in the most solemn and affectionate manner. And then gave out and sung with astonishing energy,—

‘Our souls are in his mighty hand,
And he shall keep them still;
And you and I shall surely stand
With him on Zion’s hill.

‘O what a joyful meeting there!
In robes of white array’d,
Palms in our hands we all shall bear,
And crowns upon our head.’

“To Mrs. D., whom he was leaving behind, with nine children, he said, ‘Lavina, have faith in God.’ Lying at the feet of Jesus, confessing himself the chief of sinners, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and exhorting and blessing those around him, he waited the final summons; when his purified and happy spirit rose in triumph to the skies.”

In this thrilling sketch we see the mighty power of Divine grace on the faithful use of one of the most simple means for doing good. Thus we may always, with a right spirit, and in firm reliance on God, be setting in motion a train of blessed influences for the welfare of souls which no finite mind can number or comprehend. Is the reader doing anything for God and the souls of men in this way? The day is at hand when the answer to this question will be known by an assembled world. Solemn thought! Are we ready for the event?

“That awful day will surely come,
 Th’ appointed hour makes haste,—
 When I shall stand before my Judge,
 And pass the solemn test!”

Before closing this chapter, we think a word of caution will not be amiss, in reference to loaning in every case such books as we know, and those to whom we loan them know, have a direct bearing on the individual’s besetting sin. Such a course is not always judicious, as it may unnecessarily offend and injure the very persons we design to benefit. Such persons should be approached in a more indirect manner. Perhaps at first a book that is somewhat congenial with their taste and feelings would be the most suitable; and from that to others, which come a little nearer the case; so on, if we are tender and kind in our manner toward such persons, we may put into their hands something that will have a direct bearing upon their heart and life.

The following fact from a book entitled “Christian Exertion,” by Rev. Dr. Peck, will give the reader, in part, the idea we wish to present. It is as follows:—

“Some years since, a devoted Christian became deeply concerned about the welfare of a lawyer with whom he was on terms of friendship. Constrained by Christian principle, he felt bound to

make an effort for his conversion ; he felt also the importance of exercising the utmost prudence, lest he should produce disgust and scorn where he desired to implant faith and love. With holy ingenuity, he enclosed to his friend a tract on 'Self-Righteousness,' requesting him to read it, and to inform the applicant whether, in his judgment, it was adapted, if circulated, to do good. He read to oblige his friend,—to form and give an opinion, probably, just as he would have studied a law case ; but he closed the tract with far different feelings, convinced of the danger of his state as a sinner before God, and cheerfully accepting an interest in the justifying righteousness of Christ."

The Christian who would be useful in this way, should not be discouraged if he should not see immediate good resulting from his labours. Perhaps you will prevent the extension of evil, if your designed object should not be attained. To prevent sin in any degree, is to do good. This is an important and encouraging consideration. But we should not rest short of actually accomplishing all the visible and permanent good in our power. We must be in earnest, and do in firm reliance on God for his blessing whatever we undertake. We took up a book, not long since, which by its owner was designed for cir-

culation, in which we found written on the first blank leaf the following instructive lesson, viz: "Dear reader, let this book be read with a prayerful spirit. In all our readings we should be resolved on *getting good*, that we may *do good*. To desire good is not enough; there should be a *design* to attain it." Few would fail to read with profit after having such an introduction to the work before them.

We would present for the imitation of such as have the means to do it, the following easy and effective way of doing good:—

"A Welsh clergyman, near New-York, became deeply interested in the character of 'Baxter's Dying Thoughts,' and its adaptation to do good to men who must die. He conceived the purpose of putting that work into the hands of every family in a village containing a population of some thousands either by sale or gift. The cost being but a trifle, almost every family would pay for it. Thus, by a little sacrifice of time, Baxter will be made to reiterate his solemn message in the ears of thousands in a single village."

But, above all, the Bible should be valued as the Book of books; it should be recommended as such, and pressed upon the attention of every individual as possessing paramount claims upon

the heart and conscience. It is the book designed, through grace, to lead us into the path of life,—of holiness,—of usefulness, and, finally, to glory everlasting.

Some years since, a young clergyman providentially met in a book-store a pious acquaintance, who suggested to him the advantages of studying the word of God upon his knees; he was told that he would be delightfully surprised with the new discoveries of Divine knowledge which he would thereby receive. He went to his place of labour; and, with a prayerful purpose of heart, commenced in course the study of the sacred Scriptures, as his friend had suggested. The result was most beneficial to his own soul, and, no doubt, through his instrumentality, to many others. In a letter, written to that friend some months afterward, he says, in reference to that study, “I have been blessed, *greatly blessed*,—MANY TIMES BLESSED, in the soul-engaging pursuit. O what memorable hours have I spent with my Bible and my God! I have no doubt I am a better Christian and minister for it.” This young minister has not been, and is not, alone in this spiritual study. There are many who can testify from happy experience that the blessed Bible, when thus studied, has a vital energy and power attending

it. The Psalmist had a peculiar love and regard for the Word of God. He calls it "a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path."

The Saviour himself declares, "My words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Do we so read, so study the Word of God as to realize this?

Sir William Jones, a distinguished scholar of the eighteenth century, says, "I have carefully and regularly perused the Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that the volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever language they may have been written."

John Locke, the celebrated philosopher, the last few years of his life confined his studies almost entirely to the word of God. On being asked the best way for a young man to become acquainted with the Christian religion, he replied, "Let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament. Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It hath God for its author,—SALVATION for its end,—TRUTH, without any mixture of error, for its matter."

Testimonies to the same effect might be multiplied, but we deem it unnecessary to add

more. Let the pious labourer be encouraged, then, to recommend the perusal of the Bible under all circumstances and on all occasions. The writer was much pleased some time since in hearing it proposed at a Sabbath-school concert, that every scholar should read one chapter every day from this blessed volume, and commit one verse to memory. If in our personal efforts with the impenitent we could prevail on them to do even this, it would have a most salutary effect upon their heart and life. Few would long neglect to pray, or remain unconverted, who would do this.

“ Father of mercies, in thy word
What endless glory shines ;
Forever be thy Name adored
For these celestial lines.

“ Here may the wretched sons of want
Exhaustless riches find ;
Riches above what earth can grant,
And lasting as the mind.

“ Here the fair tree of knowledge grows,
And yields a free repast ;
Sublimers sweets than nature knows
Invite the longing taste.

“ Here the Redeemer’s welcome voice
Spreads heavenly peace around ;
And life, and everlasting joys,
Attend the blissful sound.”

CHAPTER XIV.

TRACT DISTRIBUTION.

THE distribution of tracts is an eminently available and useful method of doing good. Perhaps there is no other way in which every disciple of Jesus may labour with so much success. To give a tract merely is not the thing desired or intended ; the object should be to do good. In many benevolent undertakings there are some preliminary steps to be taken before we get at the main point. In regard to a proper distribution of tracts, it is necessary that those of a right character be selected, and the person, time, and place duly considered ; then again the manner of giving them has something to do with its influence upon the receiver. The following incident illustrates our notion in this matter :—

“About eight or nine years ago,” says a clergyman in Massachusetts, “I procured for distribution among my people one hundred of Rush’s ‘Treatise upon the Effects of Ardent Spirits.’ Among those to whom they were distributed was a coloured woman, who was often observed to be under the influence of intoxicating liquors. She was a person of uncommon shrewdness, and had a great inclination for read-

ing. Some time after she received this tract she called at my house, in my absence, and left with my wife a tract, which she requested I would read, and give my opinion as to its correctness. It was Adam Clarke's 'Serious Address to Christians upon the Use of Tobacco.' She stated that she was in the habit of using tobacco ; but if she could be made to believe it was sinful, as Mr. Clarke represented it to be, she would certainly lay it aside. To satisfy her mind she wished for the opinion of her minister, in which she professed to repose entire confidence. When the tract was presented to me on my return, with the accompanying message, it was not difficult to understand the meaning. I myself had been in the habit of using tobacco for many years, both by chewing and smoking. I had already experienced many struggles in my own mind in relation to the practice, as productive of evils, and not very becoming for a Christian minister ; but, like most others indulging similar habits, had not been able to come to an effectual resolution to desist. I read Dr. Clarke's Address with great attention and pleasure, and in full view of the manner in which it had come into my hands. In addition to the *convictions* which it wrought in my own mind I was led to reflect, that it was presented to me by one who acknow-

ledged my kindness in furnishing her with arguments for reformation as to the use of ardent spirits; that we should undoubtedly meet at some future day, when the subject of the tracts which we had exchanged would be conversed upon; and if I had not given up a practice which I could not but acknowledge to be a bad one, after attending to the arguments of Dr. Clarke, the inquiry would come with ill grace from me, whether she had been benefited by the tract on ardent spirits. I accordingly took my tobacco from my pocket, and threw it out of my window, and have never used any since. I am happy to add, that Dr. Rush's tract was equally effectual upon my coloured friend. She declares, and I believe with truth, that she has drunk no ardent spirit since reading Dr. Rush.

"I feel myself under great obligations for the very appropriate return of a tract which I so much needed. In consequence of the use of tobacco I had been for years in a low, debilitated state of health."

Perhaps the devoted Harlan Page proved the efficacy of a right distribution of tracts as much as any one of whom we have heard. He was celebrated for his personal efforts for the welfare of souls, and in this work he found tracts a ready and useful auxiliary. A few facts from his me-

moirs will therefore be given for the instruction and encouragement of such as may choose to imitate his praiseworthy example.

On one occasion, when passing a school-house in L——, he called, presented some tracts to the teacher for her scholars, and addressed a few words to her on the subject of her own salvation; and to this brief interview she now ascribes her conversion to God.

When Mr. Page resided in New-York, he took for awhile the superintendence of the tract distribution in the Fourteenth Ward. He soon discovered that “little more was done than to present a tract monthly to each family; there was *no such direct, faithful, personal, and persevering effort, and wrestling prayer for particular individuals*, as duty to God and the souls of men demanded. At the meeting of his fellow-labourers in January, (1832,) he laid the subject solemnly and earnestly before them, depicting the spiritual wants of the ward; the condition of hundreds of families who absented themselves from the stated means of grace; and who, unless reached by their efforts, would probably never have the offers of salvation pressed upon their attention. He urged their obligations to God, and the souls of the perishing; and then inquired of each distributor, whether there were

not in his district one or more individuals, for whom he felt that there was special encouragement to labour, and to whose salvation he would direct his own devoted efforts and prayers till he should have evidence of conversion, or that the door of useful access was closed. It was made a subject of prayer and heart-searching with each distributor, till one fixed his mind on one individual, another on two, and another on three or more; and by the thirty-six distributors eighty-eight individuals were thus selected as special objects of their prayers, and affectionate endeavours for their salvation.

“This gave them, as will be readily conceived, a new impulse in their work. They saw a distinct object before them; important as eternity, and yet one in which they could do nothing without the marvellous displays of Divine grace. They went to the throne of mercy; they went to the objects of their affectionate solicitude; and their mouths were filled with arguments. Access was easy. The Spirit of God seemed to have gone before them, and to go with them.

“Of the eighty-eight individuals for whose salvation these distributors resolved steadfastly to pray and labour, more than thirty were reported in February, as at least in some degree anxious for their souls; and *three* of the number as re-

joicing in God ; in March, *four* ; in April, *six* ; in May, *three* ; in June, *six* ; and *twelve* in the subsequent months ; making in all *thirty-four* hopeful conversions from that ward within the year 1832. Of this number three or four were awakened by reading the tracts, and others apparently by means of the prayers and exhortations of the distributors. Many of the poor and afflicted people of God, forsaken by the world, had been found and comforted ; some backsliders reclaimed ; and the gospel message delivered to numbers who continued to reject it. Many interesting instances of the blessing of God on these efforts are alluded to in Mr. Page's memorandum ; and it is stated that almost all of them are the cases of individuals who were *scarcely reached by any other means of grace.*"

Of this devoted Christian, his biographer says : " When engaged in his usual business, the religious welfare of persons with whose state he had become acquainted was generally pressing upon his mind, and it is now known, that, for several years before he died, he almost always had by him a *memorandum of the names and residences of a few individuals* with whom he was to converse. On these he would call as he went to and from his office, or religious meetings ; and *if no names were on this list*, he felt that he was

doing little good. *He also uniformly had in his hat more or less awakening tracts, that he might present as he should judge them adapted to the state of those he met."*

The following statement is from a young clergyman respecting Mr. Page's personal faithfulness, and how he made use of the tract to aid him in his labours of love:—"The name of Brother Page," says the writer, "will ever be associated in my mind with all that is worthy of imitation in the Christian character. By the persuasions of an acquaintance I was induced to engage as a teacher in his Sabbath-school; and though I was then destitute of faith, he welcomed me, and won my confidence and love; very soon he began to address me with the utmost apparent tenderness and anxiety in reference to my own salvation. His words sank deep into my heart. They were strange words; for though I had lived among professors of religion, he was *the first who for nine or ten years had taken me by the hand, and kindly asked, 'Are you a Christian?' 'Do you intend to be a Christian?' 'Why not now?'* Each succeeding Sabbath brought him to me with anxious inquiries after my soul's health. On the third or fourth Sabbath, he gave me the TRACT, '*Way to be Saved,*' which deepened my impressions. At his request

I also attended a teachers' prayer-meeting conducted by him, where my soul was bowed down and groaned under the load of my guilt. At the close of the meeting, Mr. Page took my arm, as we proceeded on our way to our respective homes, and urged upon me the duty and privilege of an immediate surrender of my heart to Christ. As we were about to part, he held my hand, and at the corner of the street, in a wintry night, stood pleading with me to repent of sin, and submit to God.* I returned to my home, and, for the first time in many years, bowed my knees in my chamber before God, and entered into solemn covenant to serve him henceforth, in and through the gospel of his Son. God was pleased, I trust, by his Holy Spirit, to seal my vows. If I have since had any Christian joy, or done anything to advance the cause of Christ, it is to be attributed to the Divine blessing on the faithfulness of brother Page."

We might present many facts like the one just narrated, in which the tract has been made a ready and powerful auxiliary in sustaining and deepening upon the hearts of men salutary and divine influences.

No Christian who would honour his profession,

* At such a point, the Christian labourer should be **very** faithful in his importunities in behalf of awakened souls.

should be without a choice selection. They are always needed, and may always, if judiciously used, produce good effects. Travellers may especially, through the influence of these silent messengers, leave behind them a good impression,—one that will in eternity astonish and delight the pious soul who thus laboured and who sincerely prayed,

“My gracious Master, and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread, through all the earth abroad,
The honours of thy Name.”

We might extend this chapter, by presenting many thrilling sketches, showing the importance and utility of a faithful distribution of tracts; but we shall give only one more.—

Rev. Mr. Kean makes the following statement:—“Some years since, a young man from North Carolina, belonging to a company of play-actors, had his attention arrested one evening by a copy of the ‘Dairyman’s Daughter,’ lying in his room at his boarding-house. He read it with deep interest and emotion, as have thousands of others, and while he read the touching delineations of Christian character contained in this inimitable narrative, his repentings were kindled together,—his hard heart was dissolved into contrition, tenderness, and love.

“He renounced the fascinations of the stage for the high pleasures and responsibilities of the gospel ministry. He was a chosen vessel of mercy, and God honoured him in winning many souls to Christ, as he had before decoyed many to perdition. He has been greatly blessed of God in revivals, and has enjoyed pleasing evidence that he has been instrumental in the conversion of a thousand individuals, among whom twenty are now ministers of the gospel.

“This is but the beginning of good done by a single tract. How greatly will this good be augmented, through time and through eternity, while these twenty ministers shall go forth and labour in their Master’s vineyard, extending and widening the circle of blessed influences to the latest generation of men! What Christian shall have the honour of distributing that tract? Who that loves the Saviour and the souls of men will not aspire to the honour and privilege of aiding to scatter these leaves of the tree of life, carrying them to every dark habitation in our land, and to every benighted corner of the globe?”

Those who would do good in this way, should follow the distribution of every tract with the fervent prayer of faith for the Divine blessing to attend it. Does the reader do this?

CHAPTER XV.

THE CHRISTIAN CORRESPONDENT.

THERE are few among us who cannot write sufficiently well to communicate their thoughts to their relatives and friends ; and fewer still, who cannot read writing. In this way, therefore, the Christian correspondent may do much to awaken, encourage, and lead souls to Christ. If as much time were devoted to this work by Christians as the wicked spend in disseminating their pernicious and destructive sentiments, our world would not be so cursed with unholy and ruinous publications as it now is. Christians should seriously consider this matter, especially those whose gifts and callings lead them to frequently use their pens. Let such make it a rule to insert in all their letters, whenever not manifestly improper, some sentence on the theme of salvation, some word calculated to awaken new interest in the things of religion.

In Pike's "Guide to Young Disciples," we find the following statement :—

"A considerable Baptist church exists in Leicestershire, which owed its origin in a great degree to a pious remark introduced into a letter on business. This impressed the mind of the

thoughtless youth to whom it was addressed. He embraced religion, and opened his house for preaching. Many who had never heard the gospel attended. A considerable house of prayer was erected in this dark village. Many who have worshipped in that house, there is reason to believe, now worship in the better house above ; and others are pursuing the path that leads to eternal peace."

The following is another instance in point :—

A pious visitor in the city of B—— attended a prayer-meeting one evening, where she noticed a strange young man who came in, and with an air of apparent thoughtlessness took a seat in front of the congregation ; having thus conspicuously placed himself, he looked with coolness and seeming indifference on the exercises of the occasion. The sight of her eyes affected her heart, and she silently invoked the Holy Spirit's influence upon his soul ; as she prayed, a spirit of tenderness came over her mind which caused her to weep. For some days this spirit followed her, and she asked the Lord if there was anything for her to do in behalf of his salvation, that it might be made clear and plain to her mind.

Not long after, through a somewhat mysterious providence, she had her attention called to his case by a female friend of hers ; his name

was then unknown to both of them ; but a chain of circumstances transpired in which it was ascertained. It then occurred to the mind of the first-mentioned lady to write to him. With much trembling, and under a strong sense of duty, she did so upon her knees, with many prayers for the divine blessing to attend it. He received it kindly ; and for some weeks a correspondence was thus maintained between them, in which she sought to bring him to a decision to forsake sin, and come to Jesus for pardon and salvation. He became deeply awakened, but, like one of old, he practically said to her, and to the Holy Spirit, " Go thy way for this time."

Soon after this he left the city, and she heard no more about him for about a year and a half, when she received a letter through the post-office, announcing the joyful intelligence of his conversion, many hundred miles distant. In this letter he stated that he had travelled from place to place, far from home and from God ; but in all his travels could not forget her, or her letters, which pointed out to him so plainly and affectionately the way of salvation. Alone, a stranger in a strange place, he decidedly resolved, while reperusing these letters, to submit his heart to Christ ; and there, to use his own words, he " found the invaluable pearl which all

the treasures of this world cannot purchase." She never heard from him but once after this event, and then he was still maintaining his Christian integrity.

In the case just narrated, there was no opportunity for any other effort than that of private prayer and the use of the pen.

Another fact pertinent to this part of our subject has come to the knowledge of the writer. A certain gentleman, who had often been under the awakening influences of the Holy Spirit, was brought to a decision to seek an interest in the Saviour through the instrumentality of a religious letter which he received from a pious friend. That letter was followed, as every one ought to be, with the fervent prayers of its author for the divine blessing to accompany it.

Christians who have been the most faithful and successful in their personal efforts for the good of souls, frequently resorted to the use of their pens. Those devoted servants of God, Harlan Page, J. B. Taylor, and William Carvosso, are worthy examples of this kind of labour.

A young lady, for whose salvation Mr. Page was deeply interested, and to whom he wrote from the fulness of his heart, urging her to "take no rest, day nor night, till she had obtained

peace with God," makes the following acknowledgment of his faithfulness to her: "Your first epistle," she says to him, "found me in the gall of bitterness; and but for your friendly advice, I fear, I should now have been pursuing the vanities of the world. The Saviour was pleased to make you the happy instrument of showing me my sins, and bringing me to partake of his love."

Another writes to Mr. Page, and tells him, "*Your letters were the means of awakening me to the concerns of my soul.* E. L., after solemnly conversing with me one evening, read several of your letters. I never shall forget the impression they made upon my mind, and also *upon the minds of my two brothers*; for God was pleased to awaken us all at this time.

"O, Dear Sir, may God reward you for your love to immortal souls! *Do write to all the dear youth of Coventry.*"*

Mr. Page wrote a very faithful, heart-searching letter to a relative, and received in reply some months after the following:—"When your letter was received, *it was a dagger to my soul; but now, dear cousin, I think I know something of the excellency of religion*, and the peace there is in casting all my burdens on Him who cares

* Coventry was Mr. Page's native place.

for us. Within a few weeks I have taken real satisfaction in reading that kind letter. I thank you for it. Do now write me again."

The biographer of the devoted J. B. Taylor says: "How the ever-active benevolence and zeal of Mr. Taylor were continually manifesting themselves, may be seen in *everything he wrote*."

The holy and useful Carvosso, to whom allusion is made above, did not learn to write till after he was sixty-five years of age; and then in order to carry out more fully the principle of personal effort. Probably the first letter he wrote was to Counsellor Drew, of Jamaica. The following extract of one from Mr. Drew, doubtless, refers to it: "My very Dear Sir and Father in Israel,—The letter which you were so kind to write me, was a source of comfort and edification beyond anything that I have ever received. I read it at our quarterly meeting, and it confirmed the faith of many."

Mr. Carvosso's biographer says, from that hour which first called forth the use of his pen, "an avenue of new pleasure and usefulness was open to his active and benevolent mind; and now thousands of closely written pages in his hand-writing, attest how piously and diligently he improved it. He indeed presents the remarkable phenomenon of a person who, with

great diligence, toiled in business above half a century, acquired a sufficiency to retire with credit and comfort to himself, and who, with his pen, filled up volumes, and wrote hundreds of letters; and yet I believe not a page or a letter was ever written by him on any other topic than experimental and practical godliness!" What a noble example is this for the Christian correspondent! Surely few can excuse themselves, on account of their ignorance or their age, from such a useful work. And what a striking fact that his theme was always "experimental and practical godliness!" No wonder thousands were blessed when perusing such life-giving epistles; and doubtless many thousands more, while their author rests in heaven, will read those winged messages of love, and catch their hallowed spirit as they are flying from one continent to another. May the Lord attend and speed them on their course!

In this, as in other modes of Christian effort, souls have been blessed and saved, as seen in the facts just narrated. It is hoped they will interest and encourage the pious reader to consider whether all has been done with the pen, by him or her, for the benefit of undying souls, which opportunity has afforded, or circumstances required.

Another eminent example of the value of epistolary writing, is seen in the case of the apostle Paul. His whole life, after his conversion, peculiarly illustrates, in all its varied forms, the value of personal Christian effort for the welfare of souls. In this place we would notice more particularly his constant and faithful use of the pen. His inimitable, spirit-stirring epistles will ever continue to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Now, while the apostle "rests from his labours, his works do follow him." Thus it may be with thee, dear reader; let not thy powers for doing good be neglected; bring thy pen in its sanctified strength and beauty, to bear upon the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom on the earth; and may the Lord help thee to write in characters of living light! Then shall you honour God in your day and generation, and at last hear him say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

CHAPTER XVI.

TRAVELLER'S DEPARTMENT.

WE live in an age when almost everybody is on the move, especially during the milder seasons of the year. The increasing facilities for travelling seem to draw out for business, health, or pleasure, a great portion of the community; hence, many opportunities are afforded the Christian traveller to do good,—to scatter fruits from the “tree of life.” A few thoughts, by way of encouragement to this duty, are therefore presented.

The writer, while travelling some years since, and previous to her conversion, in the country with a brother, had occasion to inquire the way of an old lady. Before answering our question, with a peculiarly tender and solicitous look, she asked, “Are you bound for Canaan?” Her question was not at first understood; but it was supposed there was a town somewhere in that vicinity known by that name. The question, however, and her manner of asking it, will never be forgotten; it proved that “the words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given

by one shepherd." Only a few weeks later, an affirmative answer could have been rendered to that pious inquiry, and a further evidence given of the value of a word in season.

Does the reader ever speak thus for the good of souls and the glory of God ?

A lady, while passing from Boston to Charlestown in one of the hourly coaches, felt it her duty to converse with one of the ladies who sat near her on the subject of religion. It was a great cross to her to begin the conversation ; but, having done so, she was greatly encouraged and benefited by the hallowing response she met from two or three of the company, one of whom, a Congregational lady, recommended the perusal of some most excellent publications, and also bore her decided testimony against the pernicious tendency of novel-reading. Two gay and apparently thoughtless young ladies seemed to listen with much surprise at what was said. Thus may words of instruction be imparted on almost all occasions by those who are willing to own Christ wherever they go.

A pious traveller had to room on one occasion with a visitor where she put up. Neither of these ladies knew the religious state or professions of the other. The visitor first retired

to bed without any apparent prayer, or reading of the word of God ; but the traveller, having read a portion of Scripture, knelt, and engaged in silent prayer, and then arose and went to bed. The visitor, who was a professed Christian, feeling self-condemned and ashamed, confessed her neglect of duty on account of the cross. Let this be a lesson to professed Christians, not to be ashamed of or neglect their religious duty, wherever they may be.

A pious gentleman, with whom the writer is acquainted, was travelling a few years since in the cars : while on his journey, he entered into conversation with a young man respecting his personal salvation ; found him to be deeply serious, and almost in despair. He had left his place of business, and was going, he knew not whither, in order to rid himself of his painful convictions. The pious traveller, having become acquainted with the case, at once opened up to his mind the way of simple faith in Christ as a present Saviour. The instruction thus given God blessed to the conversion of his soul ; a visible and immediate change came over him, and he was enabled to express in strong terms the joy of his heart. "Had I known and felt what I now do," said he, "I should not have left my business as I have." He resolved to

return, like one of the ten lepers when he found he was healed, and, "with a loud voice, glorify God." The pious traveller, strengthened and encouraged, still journeyed on in his labours of love, and has been happily instrumental in leading many others to the same rich fountain of mercy.

Another case in point is that of Philip preaching Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch. Both of these persons were travelling. Philip, it seems, had for a while previous been preaching in the city of Samaria, where the angel of the Lord spake to him, saying, "Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went; and behold a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning,—and, sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot; and Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up, and sit with him. The place of the Scripture

which he read was this : He was led as a sheep to the slaughter : and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth : in his humiliation his judgment was taken away ; and who shall declare his generation ? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this ? of himself, or of some other man ? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. As they went on their way, they came unto a certain water ; and the eunuch said, See, here is water ; what doth hinder me to be baptized ? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still ; and they went both down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch ; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip that the eunuch saw him no more ; and he went on his way rejoicing."

There are many useful hints and practical instructions to be drawn from this beautiful narrative, some of which we will briefly notice. As Philip was taught by the Spirit to make efforts for the conversion of that Ethiopian, so may every

Christian who lives near to God be taught his or her duty in such matters. As Philip was obedient to this divine Teacher, so should every one be who hopes for the favour of God in the final judgment. Again: as Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch, so should Jesus be the theme of our conversation,—whether it is in travelling, or at home; whether it is to those in authority, as was the eunuch, or whether it is to the lowest servants.

After Philip had discharged his duty to this man, the Spirit of the Lord caught him away to labour for others, in other places. Thus it is, doubtless, with every truly Christian labourer; when he has discharged his duty to those who are about him, the Spirit will direct his path to other fields of usefulness.

As the eunuch “went on his way rejoicing,” he doubtless bore a faithful testimony to the power of redeeming grace; and perhaps became the first Christian missionary to his benighted nation. It is reasonable for us to suppose a man in whom was placed such great confidence as that given to him, in the charge of all the queen’s treasure, would be very likely to exert a most powerful influence in favour of the Christian religion. Thus may the devoted disciple of Jesus, by a word fitly spoken, while passing from

place to place, become not only directly, but also indirectly, a savour of life and salvation to many souls.

Another fine example of this kind is afforded in the story of our Lord's conversation with the woman of Samaria. Behold the blessed Jesus, "being wearied with his journey," as he sat on the well; how he improved the opportunity to instruct the woman, who came thither to draw water, telling her that "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." His weariness and journeying were no hindrance to his labouring with and for one poor woman. What an example of condescension, of personal effort, is this! Will ministers look at it—imitate it? Yea, every Christian should do so. We are fellow-travellers to the spirit-world, and, whether we realize it or not, every day brings us one day nearer the crisis when opportunities for usefulness will cease,—

"Whate'er we do, where'er we be,
We're travelling to the grave."

"As ye go, preach."

CHAPTER XVII.

POWER OF PRAYER WHEN OTHER MEANS HAVE
APPARENTLY FAILED.

MANY striking incidents illustrating the efficacy of prayer, where other means have been unsuccessful, might be given. We select a few, hoping they will stimulate the pious heart to grasp with new energy this mighty weapon, and to wield it in the strength of Omnipotence for the salvation of souls.

The following is from the American Baptist Magazine :—

“A pious aged woman had one son ; she used every means in her power to train him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord : he was the child of many prayers. The youth grew up, but was of a gay, dissipated turn ; she still followed him with her entreaties, faithfully warned him of his awful situation as a sinner before God, and told him what his end would be, dying in that state.

“One day he went to his mother, and said, ‘Mother, let me have my best clothes ; I am going to a ball to-night.’ She expostulated with him, and urged him not to go by every argument in her power ; he answered, ‘Mother, let

me have my clothes ; I will go, and it is useless to say anything about it.' She brought his clothes, he put them on, and was going out ; she stopped him, and said, ' My child, do not go.' He said he would ; she then said to him, ' My son, while you are dancing with your gay companions in the ball-room, I shall be out in that wilderness, praying to the Lord to convert your soul.' He went, the ball commenced ; but instead of the usual gayety, an unaccountable gloom pervaded the whole assembly. One said, ' We never had such a dull meeting in our lives : ' another, ' I wish we had not come ; we have no life ; we cannot get along : ' a third, ' I cannot think what is the matter.' The young man instantly burst into tears, and said, ' I know what is the matter ; my poor old mother is now praying in yonder wilderness for her ungodly son.' He then took his hat, and said, ' I will never be found in such a place as this again,' and left the company.

" To be short, the Lord converted his soul. Mr. Irish, his pastor, baptized him. He was soon after taken ill, and died very happy. ' Praying breath is never spent in vain.' "

A pious lady visited a Christian family of her acquaintance. She there met a young woman, who she learned was not pious, although from

a child she had lived under the influence of Christian example, and had received "line upon line, and precept upon precept." The visitor felt peculiarly interested for her salvation, and therefore said to her brother, Mr. P., "Cannot we, in view of the promise, 'that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven,' ask that your sister may be brought *this day* to seek the salvation of her soul?" After a few moments' consideration, he emphatically replied, "Yes." Mrs. P. was also interested in the same thing; but the young lady, at the time, knew nothing about the engagement in her behalf. It was made on a Sabbath morning; all the individuals, excepting Mrs. P., attended the public worship of God during the day. There was no excitement or outward occurrence to move the mind of the young woman; she seemed to have no special convictions; her judgment was, and had been for years, convinced it was her duty to become a Christian. Her decision that day seemed consequently to depend on the prayer of *faith* offered by her friends.

In the evening of that day she decided, or at least manifested her decision, in a public meeting for prayer, to seek an interest in the Saviour. She was the only person who did so, although

a pressing invitation was given to others to follow her example. She soon after professed hope in Christ.

Another case is of a young man, religiously educated, and who had often experienced powerful awakenings, but nevertheless delayed to comply with the conditions of salvation. At the suggestion of an anxious sister, some pious friends joined with her in observing a day of fasting and prayer, in which they unitedly sought for his speedy conversion to God; but he was not aware that anything of the kind was even thought of. To the glory of divine grace be it said, on the following day he gave good evidence of yielding the controversy with God. At this time his sister told him how the preceding day had been spent in his behalf. With an almost bursting heart, and eyes suffused with tears, he exclaimed, "Do you think those prayers will be answered?" He was told, that if he did not resist the Spirit's influence upon his heart, they would be. That hour, having complied with the terms of salvation, he found peace and joy to his troubled soul.

The following beautiful comment on the same passage is taken from Rev. James Porter's book on "Revivals of Religion." He says:—"The want of agreement is a great obstacle. Saith

Jesus, 'If two of you shall agree on earth touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.' This point being discussed one day at a protracted meeting, in the town of D——, a lady from Boston said to the preacher, 'I suppose you believe what you have preached : ' to which he assented. She then proposed that he and another minister present unite in prayer two successive days, that God would convert her brother, an influential man, and a violent enemy to the Church, and bring him out to meeting and to Christ, promising that she would fast and pray for the same object. The proposition came fully up to the terms of the text, and it was agreed to. The next afternoon the man was at meeting, and sat in the gallery. When the invitation was given for inquirers, he went down through the entry, walked up to the altar, and knelt. That evening he renounced his former creed, and was soon happy in the Lord. He has been a pillar in the Church ever since, and a living demonstration of the power of united prayer."

Many such thrilling incidents are before us ; but we shall add only the following. It was communicated to us by a devoted clergyman, with whom we are personally acquainted :—

“I was labouring,” said he, “in the town of B——, State of Vermont, in the autumn of 1842; a young lady of my society, who had been making personal efforts for the conversion of her parents, brothers, and sisters, arose with deep and anxious feelings in class-meeting one evening, and requested an interest in the prayers of the society, for God’s awakening Spirit upon the hearts of her family, that they might be led to Christ, and, with her, make their way to heaven. We all,” says the pastor, “knelt and engaged in prayer for this object. In about three weeks from this time, one of her brothers came to the altar of prayer; her father and mother soon followed; then a sister, and another brother; in all five persons of that family, in little more than three weeks, were happily converted to God.

“I inquired of the young man who first openly manifested his determinations to seek religion, how long it was since he had felt its need? He stated, that on such an evening, naming the time, he felt a singularly strange sensation of mind, very different from anything he had ever before experienced, which induced him to decide on seeking the salvation of his soul. The time to which he referred proved to be the very evening in which we, without his

knowledge, engaged in prayer for his awakening."

Such facts as these should encourage every child of God to be diligent, fervent, and believing in their prayers. Hannah, Elijah, Daniel, the Church praying for the liberation of Peter, Cornelius, and a host of others that might be mentioned, are worthy examples in this matter. They prayed till they prevailed; so should we: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force,"—it is the violence of holy importunity, of unyielding purpose of soul, which takes no denial, and which, like wrestling Jacob, cries out, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." When Jacob prayed thus he prevailed.

But God must be "inquired of by the house of Israel to do these things for them" which he has promised, and which we so much need. He says, "Ask, and ye shall receive;" and, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." These, and many other corresponding passages, open a wide field for the exercise of this mighty agency. O that professed Christians fully appreciated this holy, this heavenly privilege!

CHAPTER XVIII.

PLAN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER.

To “pray without ceasing,” and “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance,” are among the most salutary and important injunctions given to the disciples of Christ :—

“Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,
The Christian’s native air ;
His watchword at the gates of death,—
He enters heaven with prayer.”

“A frequent, solemn, and serious use of the duty of prayer,” says Sir Matthew Hale, in his “Treatise on the Knowledge of God,” “interrupts a custom of sin, by degrees weakens the old man, and will in time make a strangeness between our lusts and our souls. And let a man be sure of these *two truths*: that as he that comes upon his knees with a secret purpose to hold confederacy with any sin, he shall be the worse,—the more hardened, and the more neglected by that God who searches the heart; so whosoever he be that comes to his Maker in the integrity of his heart, though sin adheres as

close to that heart of his as his skin does to his flesh, shall find that employment will make those lusts that were most dear to him, by degrees to become strange and loose to his soul."

"Prayer," says Bickersteth, "gains for us spiritual strength. It is that singular duty in which every grace is exercised, every sin opposed, every blessing obtained, the whole soul revived, strengthened, and invigorated for the Christian race. Just in proportion to your prayers, so is your holiness, so is your usefulness."

The same writer remarks in another paragraph, that private prayer is an engine of greater power than all human means put together. The greatest of earthly monarchs, neglecting prayer, has not that power to glorify God, benefit man, and secure his own happiness, which the humble and praying Christian has. The prayer of a poor, destitute, and afflicted Christian, in the name of Christ, may turn the hearts of kings and princes, save his country, raise up pious ministers, secure a blessing to their labours, send the gospel to the heathen, and advance the kingdom of Christ in the world."

In order, therefore, to secure the numerous

advantages to be derived from prayer, we propose that all the time which can possibly be spared from other duties should be consecrated to this. Some are so situated that they can allot many hours each day to this holy duty. Others, perhaps, can find but little time for protracted and retired devotion. Such, however, should so manage their affairs, and economize their time, as to maintain a conscience void of offence in this matter. Where there is a heart—a will to serve God,—the time will generally be found for it. Dr. Doddridge says, “There are few who, with proper care, might not have a half or three-quarters of an hour at command, for reading the Scriptures and prayer, morning and evening.”

It is much better to neglect the body a little, than to neglect the soul and its prosperity altogether. Many while away a whole hour at dinner, perhaps, when half of the time might be spent in prayer. Again, others retire to dress, rather than to hold communion with God. “Let those,” says Bishop Horne, “who retire in the middle of the day, to adorn their persons, take the opportunity of putting on the ornaments of grace, and renewing the spirit of their minds.”

Whenever it is impracticable to retire for mid-

day devotion, the Christian should enter the inner chamber of his own heart, and there, while he may be about the store, shop, dwelling, street, or any other place, he should pour out his soul to God in prayer, being particularly careful to “watch thereunto with all perseverance.”

“When ’tis e’er denied thee
In solitude to pray;
Should holy thoughts come o’er thee,
When friends are round thy way;
E’en then, the silent breathing,
Thy spirit raised above,
Will reach the throne of glory,
Where dwells eternal Love.”

The less time a person has for frequent and stated seasons of retirement, the more necessary it is to contract and maintain a close habit of ejaculatory prayer. “How highly,” says Cooke, “would a courtier prize a privy key of admittance to his sovereign at all times! This key we possess in ejaculatory prayer. It is a golden chain of union between earth and heaven.”

Men of the world will confine their attention to their business hour after hour, and day after day, and so on for weeks, months, and years. They are not discouraged or turned aside from their purposes by distractions or interruptions. The reason is, they mind,—they love,—earthly things. O Christian! take a lesson of these men;

seek a spiritual mind and spiritual things. "All the radii of the circle should meet in this centre,—in a fixedness of heart to God in his worship." It will then be easy to pray anywhere, and at all times, "without ceasing," and "with all prayer."

We would most earnestly recommend the habit of early rising for devotional purposes. If we had nothing else to occupy our minds, or take up our time, it is as highly important to rise early for the observance of this duty as for any earthly pursuit. "It was the daily practice of the eminent physician Boerhaave, through his whole life, as soon as he rose in the morning, which was generally very early, to retire for an hour to private prayer and meditation on some part of the Scriptures." The celebrated Col. Gardner, also, "used constantly to rise at four in the morning, and to spend his time till six in secret exercises of devotion, reading, meditation, and prayer."

In the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, we find it recommended to the preachers, "as often as possible to rise at four. And from four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, to meditate, pray, and read the Scriptures." If this rule were adhered to by the entire Church of Christ, as it was by Wesley and his early coadjutors, it would have a most

salutary effect, not only upon professed Christians, but also upon the world generally.

We might enumerate other examples in favour of this practice ; but deem it unnecessary, from the well-known fact, that in every age of the world persons who were eminent for their piety and usefulness have, with few exceptions, been early risers, and that for devotional and benevolent purposes.

In addition to the time gained for prayer by early rising, we would recommend the setting apart some part of our remaining time for the same object. It is said of Luther, that “not a day passed in which he did not employ in prayer three at least of his very best hours.” Many other examples might be referred to, but we pass to notice the example of Christ. We read in the Scriptures of his going “out into a mountain to pray, and continuing all night in prayer to God ;” and again we are told, that, “rising up a great while before day, he went out into a solitary place, and there prayed.” What touching examples are these of protracted devotion ! Here he is alone with God ! O what a place is this for the Christian ! A place where he may see light in God’s light,—where he may discover his relations to God, to heaven, to Jesus, and all holy beings. Here the mind of the Infinite in-

fuses itself into that of the finite. Here open up to the devout mind incomprehensible scenes of infinite glory.

On another occasion, the Saviour "took Peter, and James, and John, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering." Again we trace him to the garden of Gethsemane: Here the most touchingly awful scene transpired that heaven and earth ever witnessed in the form of devotion. He withdrew from his disciples "about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

If such protracted and frequent seasons of prayer were observed by the Son of God, should not poor, weak, erring, and sinful man use the same means of grace. O Christian! in thy heights of joy, or depths of agony, follow Jesus in this particular. Think not that a few brief and hasty prayers will dethrone Satan, and save a perishing world. A writer, in advocating

the utility of protracted seasons of devotion, says, "I cannot hesitate to say, that I have learned more of human nature, and of God, in all the phases in which he exhibits himself to his creatures, while continuing in immediate communion with him for an hour, or hours together, than in any other, or all other ways. The great Teacher himself has taught me more in a few moments, than man can teach in multiplied volumes." Many devout persons can attest this fact from their own experience.

To help in the observance of an hour or two at a stated or consecrated season of private devotion, we will make the following suggestions on intercessory prayer :

We will begin with prayer for our relatives, and those with whom we are immediately connected in life. At certain times they should all be remembered separately. Rev. Mr. Romaine "devoted two hours every Friday to particular intercession with God for his friends. He had their names written down on paper, and used to walk about his room, mentioning them one by one, and specifying their wants as far as he knew them, with earnest supplication."

It is also said of Col. Gardner, to whom we have already referred, that "when he received a letter from any of his Christian friends which

particularly affected his heart, he could not stay till the stated return of his devotional hour, but immediately retired to pray for them, and to give vent to those religious emotions of mind which such a correspondence raised." How invaluable was such a friend !

Mr. Sheppard, in his "Thoughts on Private Devotion," says, "With respect to other friends, it seems most natural and expedient, that our prayers should be but occasional, in order that they may then be the more prolonged. There are few of our best friends whom we can visit daily. How happy would some be, if they could meet even yearly ! But if we made it a rule of piety and kindness daily to offer up particular intercession for *one* individual, or one household, and thus successively for each, these secret visits of the heart would, in many instances, be far more frequent than our personal intercourse can be. Amidst the inclemency of winter, or in the chamber of sickness, we might still make swift excursions, and offer the best, though unheard salutations of Christian affection."

We are taught to pray for rulers, that they may "be just, ruling in the fear of God," and "working righteousness," a "terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well."

The duty of praying for ministers is also enjoined upon us ; and how important it is that heaven's ambassadors should be "full of faith and the Holy Ghost,"—"burning and shining lights,"—instrumental in turning "many to righteousness," and "from the power of Satan unto God ;" and being "an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity !"

For the Church of Christ prayer should also be made. "For Zion's sake," should every praying soul exclaim, "I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth ;" and that it may be "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish"—the "salt of the earth"—the "city set on an hill, which cannot be hid."

Teachers should also be subjects of intercession with those who are under them. For these we should pray, that they may have wisdom and grace to "train up a child in the way he should go," both temporally and spiritually. The rudiments of a holy and useful life should be taught by every instructor.

Prayer too should be offered for children and

youth. On these dear objects of a Saviour's love, the future welfare of the Church and world depends. O, Christian reader! spread out before thy mind, in all its bearings, the duties and responsibilities which are soon to fall on their youthful hearts; and then, in the fulness of thy soul, pray that the Holy Ghost,—that gift of gifts,—may rest upon them, and draw them early to seek the Saviour, that they may find him, and thereby become ornaments to the Church, and a blessing to the world.

Editors and authors, as persons who exert, for good or for evil, an extensive influence, should not be forgotten in our supplications. How becoming the Christian to pray for them, that they may be kept or restrained from publishing anything of a pernicious and destructive tendency, and that they may be influenced by holy and virtuous principles.

Physicians are a class of men which few think of making a subject of special prayer. To their professional skill the lives of many are committed, and on that life eternal consequences are suspended. How necessary, then, to pray that such men may be Christians, and so prepared to be physicians to the souls as well as to the bodies of their patients! It is a well-known fact, that these men often have access to, and influence

with, persons when sick and dying, that no others, not even ministers, have. This influence and opportunity to do good, God has given them through his providences in their professional calling. Yet it is to be feared that very few realize their fearful responsibility in this matter. To those who do not, it may well be said, "Physician, heal thyself!"

We would also suggest the propriety of praying for the removal of great and prevailing sins—licentiousness, for example. From Genesis to Revelation this sin is condemned in the most emphatic terms. Facts, detailing curses and judgments poured out upon cities and individuals, stand out in bold relief as a warning to "them that after should live ungodly." The judgment of the great day will develop most appalling sins of this description. Could the fact that "every secret thing" is to be brought up before an assembled universe, and the "great white throne" be kept before the eye of the transgressor, we think there would be many turning from their deeds of darkness, and washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb. O, Christian! pray this may be the case. We appeal to you in the name of Christ, whose disciples you profess to be, to pray and live against all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

Thus we might proceed to spread out, though briefly, many other subjects for prayer; but enough, we believe, has been said for the reader to understand the plan which we would suggest. A due amount of meditation and suitable reading should always be connected with it, if time and opportunity permit. This is very essential to aid the Christian to "pray with the spirit and with the understanding also."

We would suggest also that, when we hear or know of persons being in affliction on account of the death of friends, or of any other providential trial, we add them, at least for a season, to our list of subjects for prayer, that their afflictions may be sanctified to them, and God glorified in the result.

Before closing this chapter we would further suggest the propriety, yea, duty and utility, of connecting occasional fastings with our stated or occasional seasons of protracted devotion.

It has been observed by Parr, that "religious fasting is a notable help to prayer, and is often commended to us in the word of God. It is a voluntary abstaining from dinner or supper, or both, as our bodies will bear, and from all delicacies, for one day or more, undertaken to make us more fit for prayer and repentance. The ends in our fastings are: First, A fitting

ourselves for prayer, that we may be the more lively and earnest; and, secondly, That it may be a help to and testimony of our sorrow for sin, and of our humiliation before God."

There are many professed Christians who know little of the advantages to be derived from a Scriptural observance of this duty. The word of God abounds with instruction, commands, and encouragement on this subject. And every Christian, who would mortify the lusts of the flesh, overcome all sin, and have power with God in behalf of others, should come up to a Scriptural observance of this duty. There is a faith,—a divine power for doing good,—which can be obtained in no other way.

When a certain man brought his child to the early disciples of Christ, to have an evil spirit cast out of him, they could not do it; and the man afterward brought his child to Jesus, who cast out the evil spirit, and healed him. Then the disciples asked, "Why could not we cast him out?" Jesus answered them, saying, "Because of your unbelief;" and then added, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." May we not infer from this, that prayer and fasting are necessary in order to overcome our unbelief, and to gain power with God for the benefit of others?

We would not attach anything, in itself meritorious, to fasting and prayer; but we do say it is a means of grace, whereby we may draw near to God,—overcome the world, the flesh, and Satan; and whereby we may, in a most benevolent and universal sense, “do good unto all men.”

Jesus, our great exemplar, fasted often; on one occasion, just before entering on his public ministry, he fasted forty days. It is very probable that he not only fasted, but wrestled in prayer, during that time, against temptations of every possible description which Satan could devise: not only those specified, but also those spoken of by the Apostle Paul, where he says, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Jesus has doubtless given us his example of steadfast resistance of Satan’s devices, of his frequent and protracted seasons of prayer and fasting, for our encouragement and imitation. If he used means of grace, it is not for his followers to discard or neglect them. The writer firmly believes that an abuse or neglect of the means of grace which God hath appointed for his people’s observance, has been the means of

plunging many, very many, souls into perdition. "Ye are my friends," says Jesus, "if ye do whatsoever I command you." It is through obedience to the commands of Christ, that his people are to become the "salt of the earth." We say, *through obedience*; obedience to the command and duty of prayer,—of fasting, of self-denial, of open and direct effort to save souls, including each and every other requirement enjoined by the Word and the Spirit of God: all to be done in faith, with a single eye to the Divine glory. Then, and not till then, shall we be able to say with the Psalmist, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

In regard to the *manner* of fasting, we think many people err. Some think because their health is feeble they must not fast; others think it will not do for them, because their calling is a laborious one,—if they did not eat they could not work. We think it best that such persons should not abstain from all food, but simply for one or two days, or more, to deny themselves of all luxuries. This often proves advantageous to physical as well as spiritual health. In fasting, as well as in everything else we undertake, there should be a sincere purpose of heart to please God—to make our-

selves, through his grace assisting us, more fully qualified to meet and discharge our individual duties in the best possible manner.

Christian reader! let us bear this in mind, that by our neglecting to improve the gifts of God, which are bestowed upon us for usefulness, souls are suffering,—yea, perishing,—and that eternally. We shall soon meet them at the bar of God. It will be known there how much pains we have taken—how much effort put forth—to save them. Yes, it will be known there how much we have prayed for them, and how much we have wept over them, as did Jesus over Jerusalem.

It is to be feared that few of us realize our individual responsibilities to offer in behalf of a fallen, perishing world, the prayer of faith. It is mocking God not to pray in faith,—“Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.”

Before closing this chapter, we must offer a few thoughts on another very important point standing in close connexion with all Christian experience and duty, and especially with that of effectual praying,—we mean the influence of the Holy Ghost. Here we realize, as we have in no other undertaking, that

“Thoughts are broken, and language lame.”

We want this divine Agent to touch our heart,—our lips,—our pen,—yea, all our powers,—with its life-giving and sin-consuming energy. Without it we are dead to an experimental consciousness that Christ is a “Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sin,”—dead to all the knowledge of “Christ in us the hope of glory,”—dead as to any knowledge of the immortality of the soul and its future destiny,—dead as to a realization of the “exceeding great and precious promises” of the gospel,—dead to the “power of Christ’s resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings,—yes! dead to all these, and much more which relates to spiritual life and salvation. For “the natural man,” says the Apostle, “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Again: “The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” And again, “It is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” Therefore, “that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God,” the Holy Ghost

has come to our fallen and benighted race: "This is the light," which, in a greater or less degree, "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This is the "Holy Spirit of promise," by which the saints of God can and do know that their "fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," if we have put on Christ, through "belief of the truth."

And now, dear readers, we entreat you to give earnest heed to the teachings of the Bible on this momentous theme, especially as to the office of the Spirit in aiding us to pray effectually. Doctor Owen has observed, "that it cannot be denied that the assistance which the Holy Spirit gives us in our prayers and supplications, is more frequently and expressly asserted in Scripture than any other operation of his whatever." This is doubtless true; for "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Before Christ left this world, he promised to send the Holy Ghost. This, he declared to his disciples "shall teach you all things; he shall guide you into all truth,—he shall show you

things to come; he shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment to come." He further said to his disciples, whom he had just been instructing to preach his gospel in all the world, "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." They did "tarry," and, being assembled "with one accord in one place, suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Then they began to speak and to labour for the souls of men, with powerful and successful efforts. About three thousand souls were added to the Lord, and numbered with his people, on that day. Now we hope all our Christian readers will obey the instruction of their risen Lord, and tarry in prayer,—in earnest and believing prayer,—until "endued with power from on high." Then, and not till then, will you speak and labour with good and powerful success for the salvation of souls.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCLUSION.

IN embracing and carrying out the principle of personal Christian effort, it is not required that we possess any particular amount of health, learning, wealth, or influence. It consists in doing and being the best we can under existing circumstances. "It requires," says Hinton, in his work on Individual Effort, "no neglect of the ordinary duties of life, no absence from business, no violent effort, no cost of money, (i. e., beyond our means.) The efforts now advocated are such as Christians can make *in*, and not *out of*, the common occupations of life, without any deviation from diligence in business, propriety of manners, or the necessary wisdom of piety. Such efforts have immense advantages in comparison with any other which can be made."

Rev. T. Scott, in his life of that eminent man, Rev. John Bunyan, says, "he was confined in Bedford jail more than twelve years; and during this tedious imprisonment, or at least a part of it, he had no books except a Bible, and 'Fox's Martyrology;' yet in this situation he penned the Pilgrim's Progress, and many other treatises."

It is said also of the good Richard Baxter, that he wrote his excellent book, "The Saints' Everlasting Rest," on a bed of sickness, and "in such an ill state of health as to be in continual expectation of death for many months." That eminent and useful writer, Charlotte Elizabeth, and many others to whom we might refer, have written amid severe trials and difficulties, whose labours God has crowned with blessed results. We allude to these incidents, more particularly to encourage our pious readers to trust in God, and to do the best, and all they can, to make the world better for their being in it, however embarrassing and discouraging may be their circumstances.

"I have heard Mr. Cecil," says his biographer, "mention, with much feeling, many deep and secret conflicts of mind with which he was exercised while at college; added to which, he had to meet many insults which profligate men offer to piety. Under these impressions, he was one day walking in the physic gardens, where he observed a very fine pomegranate-tree, cut almost through the stems near the root. On asking the gardener the reason of this, 'Sir,' said he, 'this tree used to shoot so strong, that it bore nothing but leaves; I was therefore obliged to cut it in this manner; and when it was almost cut

through, then it began to bear plenty of fruit.' The gardener's explanation of this act conveyed a striking illustration to Mr. Cecil's mind, and he went back to his room comforted and instructed by this image."

Thus God invariably orders his providences, his chastenings, and all his dealings with the children of men, for their profit and his own glory. For this cause he has committed the treasures of grace to "earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Let us not, therefore, be discouraged, or hindered, as we have before remarked, from doing and being the best we can under existing circumstances.

Before taking leave of our readers, we shall offer a few more thoughts in regard to the manner of proceeding, or dealing with souls. We do not know that it can be given in a more clear and simple style than in the language of the faithful Baxter, to whom we have so frequently referred. He says, "Choose the fittest season. Deal not with men when they are in a passion, or where they will take it for a disgrace. When the earth is soft, the plough will enter. Take a man when he is under affliction, or newly impressed under a sermon. Christian faithfulness requires us not only to do good when it falls in

our way, but to watch for opportunities. Suit yourself also to the quality and temper of the person. You must deal with the ingenious more by argument than persuasion. There is need of both to the ignorant. The affections of the convinced should be deeply excited. The obstinate must be sharply reproved. The timorous must be dealt with tenderly. Love, and plainness, and seriousness, take with all; but words of terror some can scarce bear. Use also the aptest expressions. Unseeming language makes the hearers loathe the food they should live by; especially if they be men of curious ears and carnal hearts. Let all your reproofs and exhortations be backed with the authority of God. Let sinners be convinced that you speak not of your own head. Turn them to the very chapter and verse where their sin is condemned, and their duty commanded. The voice of man is contemptible, but the voice of God is awful and terrible. They may reject your words, that dare not reject the words of the Almighty. Be frequent in this duty of exhortation.

“If we are ‘always to pray, and not to faint,’ because God will have us importunate with himself; the same course, no doubt, will be most prevailing with men. Therefore we are commanded ‘to exhort one another daily,’ and

‘with all long-suffering.’ The fire is not always brought out of the flint at one stroke, nor men’s affections kindled at the first exhortation. And if they were, yet, if they be not followed, they will soon grow cold again. Follow sinners with your loving and earnest entreaties, and give them no rest in their sin. This is true charity,—the way to save men’s souls,—and will afford you comfort upon review. Strive to bring all your exhortations to an issue. If we speak the most convincing words, and all our care is over with our speech, we shall seldom prosper in our labours: but God usually blesses their labours, whose very heart is set upon the conversion of their hearers, and who are therefore inquiring after the success of their work. If you reprove a sin, cease not till the sinner promises to leave it. If you are exhorting to a duty, urge for a promise to set about it immediately. If you would draw men to Christ, leave not till you have made them confess the misery of their present unregenerate state, and the necessity of Christ, and of a change, and have promised you to fall close to the use of means. O that all Christians would take this course with all their neighbours that are enslaved to sin, and strangers to Christ. Once more, be sure your example exhort as

well as your words. Let them see you constant in all the duties you persuade them to. Let them see in your lives that superiority to the world which your lips recommend. Let them see by your constant labours for heaven that you indeed believe what you would have them believe. A holy and heavenly life is a continual pain to the consciences of sinners around you, and continually solicits them to change their course."

One way of securing an influence with the sinner for the benefit of his soul, which many professed Christians overlook, is to show kindness and attention to his temporal as well as spiritual wants, when sick, or in poverty, or distress of any kind. A little money, or time, or labour thus devoted, often opens the avenue to an impenitent heart, which a purely religious effort could never produce.

An example of Col. Gardner's is worthy of imitation in this respect. Dr. Doddridge says of him: "I remember I had once occasion to visit one of his dragoons in his last illness at Harborough, and I found the man upon the borders of eternity; a circumstance which, as he apprehended himself, must add some peculiar weight and credibility to his discourse. And he then told me, in the colonel's absence, that he

questioned not but he should have everlasting reason to bless God on Col. Gardner's account; for he had been a father to him in all his interests, both temporal and spiritual. He added, that he visited him almost every day during his illness, with religious advice and instruction, as well as taking care that he should want nothing that might conduce to the recovery of his health. And he did not speak of this as the result of any particular attachment to him, but as the manner in which he was accustomed to treat those under his command."

Thus the Saviour, while tabernacled in the flesh, "went about doing good" to the bodies as well as the souls of men. Blessed example! Would that more of his professed followers imitated it! Holy Spirit! descend, and rest upon the reader's heart, and fire it with love and zeal to follow in the holy and self-denying footsteps of Jesus!

In setting about the work which we have sought in these pages to bring before the mind, we suggest a commencement at the point nearest home. Thus the early Christians, after receiving their power and commission from on high, commenced where they received it, at Jerusalem. So Paul, when he was converted and commissioned to preach the gospel, began just where he was,

at Damascus. Even now the same requirement and obligation holds good. We should commence just where we are, if we have never done so before. The husband should labour for the wife, and the wife for the husband ; the parent for the child, and the child for the parent ; the brother for the sister, and the sister for the brother ; and so on, till every person within the reach of our individual influence has been faithfully dealt with,—so faithfully that our skirts shall be clear from the blood of every soul who shall persist in sin, and finally perish.

To this end we present the following brief rules, for the adoption of those who are without a fixed and definite method or course of labour:—

1st. I will consecrate myself, soul and body, all my faculties, powers, and possessions, from this time henceforth, to God and to his service.

2d. I will endeavour to cultivate a realizing sense of the worth of souls, the uncertainty of human life, and the fearful responsibilities connected with it.

3d. I will endeavour to make and leave such impressions for God, on every individual with whom I may meet or associate, as I shall not be ashamed of in the final judgment.

4th. I will make direct, constant, and faithful effort for the salvation of individuals.

5th. I will, if practicable, pray *with* all persons for whom I make such effort; and especially pray for all such in secret, at least once or twice a day, till death or conversion puts an end to my efforts.—Perhaps this rule might be varied in regard to the times of praying in secret for particular individuals. Some devoted labourers make it the almost incessant and constant burden of their supplications, till they gain the witness or assurance that the desire of their heart will be granted, and then they pray more occasionally for that object; just enough to keep their faith unwavering. Cases might be alluded to within the knowledge of the writer, where Christians have kept their unconverted friends bound by the cords of faith for years, on the divine altar; and during that time have not doubted in regard to the salvation of the individuals thus offered in sacrifice to God. We believe it best, as a general thing, to stick close in prayer for such as have been selected for special effort, till we gain this assurance. The widow's importunity—"her continual coming,"—was the point in which she prevailed with the unjust judge. "Shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long

with them ? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."

6th. I will endeavour while praying to exercise faith in the promises of God, because I am required and encouraged to do so. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

7th. I will do all things with a single eye to the glory of God, and with persevering purpose of heart to rest solely on the merits and efficacy of Christ's atonement for all I have, or want, in time and in eternity.

And now, dear reader, are you prepared to affix your name, your hand, your heart to the above rules ? If not, what excuse can you make ? The retributions of a judgment day are just before you. O see to it that no excuses are framed which cannot stand in that great day ! In view of living for God, for the souls of men, for heaven and immortal glory, I once more ask, in the language of the holy Baxter, What is "THY RESOLUTION ? Wilt thou yield obedience, or not ? I am confident thy conscience is convinced of thy duty. Darest thou go on in thy common, careless course, against the plain evidence of reason and the commands of God, and against the light of thy own conscience ? Darest thou live as loosely, sin as boldly, and pray as seldom as before ?

Or dost thou rather resolve to gird up the loins of thy mind, and set thyself wholly to the work of thy salvation, and break through the oppositions, and slight the scoffs and persecutions of the world, and ‘lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset thee, and run with patience the race set before thee?’ I hope these are thy full resolutions.” “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

“O that all the joy might know
Of living thus to thee!
Find their heaven begun below,
And here thy glory see!

“Walk in all thy works prepared
To exercise their grace,
Till they gain their full reward,
And see thy glorious face!”

THE END.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Oct., 2005

Preservation Technologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

BV
450

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 043 383 A